NATION

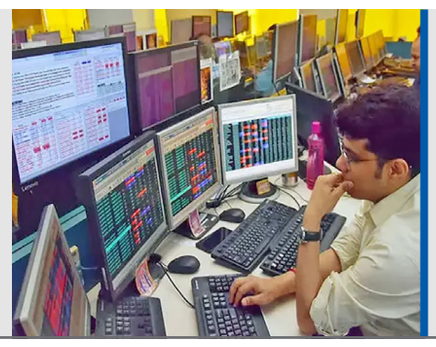
TN blames heat for deaths at IAF air show

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Mkt falls, Investors' lose ₹8 lakh crore

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Hardik overtakes Kohli to finish most T20Is with a six

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Drones suspected to be from China spotted in HP

SHIMLA, 7 OCT

Drones have been spotted along the Indo-China border in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur district and they are likely being used for surveillance and espionage purposes, state minister Jagat Singh Negi said on Monday. Speaking to PTI, Negi said drone activity has been noticed in Shipki La and Rishi Dogri villages in Poo block of the district. "Multiple drones frequently flying near the border area have been spotted in the past week and several people have informed me about such sightings," Negi, the MLA from Kinnaur assembly constituency, said. He claimed that the drones have also been sighted by the police and Army. *—PTI*

Gymnast Dipa announces retirement

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Dipa Karmakar, who blazed a trail by becoming the first Indian woman gymnast to compete at the Olympics and finish a historic fourth, announced her retirement on Monday, ending a career in which she inspired awe for routinely performing the highly-difficult Produnova vault. The 31-year-old from Tripura grabbed headlines with her fourth-place finish in the vault final of the 2016 Rio Games, losing an Olympic medal by just 0.15 points. "After much thought and reflection, I have decided to retire. This is not an easy decision, but it feels like the right time," she said in a statement. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

144 had paid to get leaked NEET-UG paper, says CBI

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The CBI has identified 144 candidates who had allegedly paid to get NEET-UG leaked and solved papers hours before they were to take the examination for admissions in medical colleges, officials said on Monday. In its third chargesheet filed last week, the CBI has named Pankaj Kumar who stole the papers from Oasis school in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand in collusion with its Principal Ahsanul Haque and Vice-Principal Md Imtiyaz Alam, they said. Crime was allegedly committed once trunks carrying the paper reached the school from the bank vault after 8am on 5 May, day of the exam, they said. The chargesheet with over 5,500 pages gives a detailed modus operandi of the gang that leaked the paper. *—PTI*

India, Maldives patch up, ink $400M currency swap deal

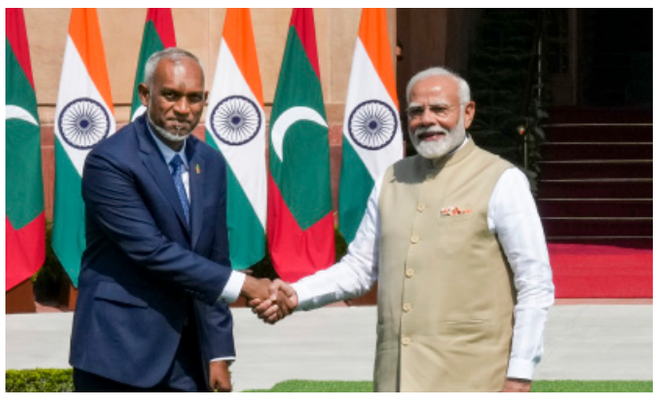
Bilateral ties took a hit after Maldives ministers' tweets on PM

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India on Monday asserted that its friendly ties with the Maldives will continue as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Mohamed Muizzu unveiled a blueprint for comprehensive economic and maritime cooperation, signalling a reset of the relationship that had hit a rough patch last year due to anti-New Delhi rhetoric.

Modi and Muizzu reviewed the bilateral relationship and agreed on a currency swap agreement that would grant access to the Maldives to USD 400 million support and an additional Rs 3,000 crore.

"I am thankful to the Indian government for providing support in the form of Rs 30 billion, in addition to the USD 400 million bilateral currency swap agreement which will be instrumental in addressing the foreign exchange issues we are facing right now," Muizzu said after wide-ranging talks with Modi at the Hyderabad House here.



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

"We have adopted a 'Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership' to add a strategic dimension to the bilateral ties," Modi said.

The two leaders also launched Rupay card in the Maldives, virtually inaugurated the new runway at the Hanimaadhoo international airport and agreed to further strengthen bilateral relations that had hit a rocky patch last year. "In future, we will work to connect India and the Maldives through UPI as well," Modi said.

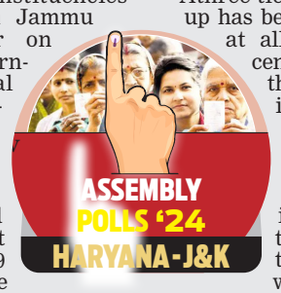
Earlier, Muizzu, who arrived on a five-day state visit on Sunday, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan by President Droupadi Murmu. Prime Minister Modi was also present on the occasion. The Maldivian president is scheduled to visit Agra and Mumbai on Tuesday and Bengaluru on Wednesday before returning to Male on Thursday.

Muizzu won the presidential election last year on the 'India out' campaign and asked New Delhi to withdraw its military personnel posted in the archipelago nation by May this year. The bilateral ties took a hit when Maldivian ministers made critical remarks about Modi. Muizzu has since toned down his anti-India stance and even sacked ministers who were critical of Modi. *—PTI*

Counting for 2 states today amid tight security

JAMMU/SRINAGAR/CHANDIGARH, 7 OCT

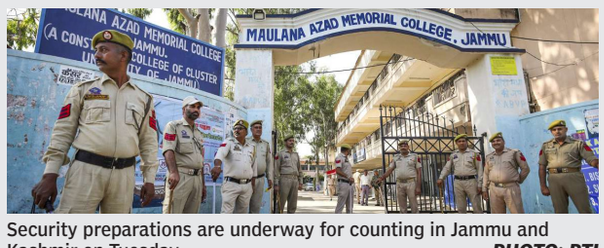
Counting of votes for 90 Assembly constituencies will begin in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday morning, the final lap of an electoral journey that will give the Union Territory its first elected government since 2019 when Article 370 was abrogated.



Congress-National Conference alliance, PDP and BJP are the main stakeholders in the Assembly election that comes five years after the erstwhile state was bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Athree-tier security set up has been put in place at all the counting centres to ensure that all goes well in the restive border UT. Meanwhile, BJP is confident of retaining power for a third term, and the Congress, which is out of power for 10 years, more than hopeful of making a comeback in Haryana.

Elections are due in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi in a few months. *—PTI*



Security preparations are underway for counting in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

ONE YEAR AND COUNTING

Israeli strike kills at least 10 firefighters in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 7 OCT

Lebanon's Health Ministry said on Monday an Israeli strike in south Lebanon overnight killed 10 firefighters.

"An Israeli strike overnight targeted a local firefighting centre in Baraasheet where 10 civil defence members were present," municipal official Reda Ashour said.

The health ministry reported the "killing of 10 firefighters" who were "in the building ready to go out on rescue missions," adding efforts to remove the rubble were ongoing. The latest report brings to 115 the number of rescuers killed in a year since the start of cross-border fire between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, according to an AFP tally of official figures.

Hezbollah said it targeted Israeli troops in a south Lebanon border village as Israel said it had deployed another division to participate in operations in Lebanon. Hezbollah fighters "bombed... a gathering of Israeli forces in the Maroun Al-Ras Park with a rocket salvo," the Iran-backed group said in a statement, after announcing separately it had targeted several areas of Israel. *—Agencies*

Flames and smoke rise from an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon, on early Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

>>>More on Pages 5, 6

Cabinet to discuss caste census on 18 Oct

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that the Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, popularly known as the caste census, will "most likely" be placed before the Cabinet for discussion on 18 October, and the government will act further in accordance with the decision taken in the meeting.

Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes under its then Chairman K Jayaprakash Hegde on 29 February submitted the report to Siddaramaiah.

The report was submitted amid objections by certain sections of society and also within the ruling Congress.

Karnataka's two dominant communities -- Vokkaliags and Lingayats -- have expressed reservations about the survey, calling it "unscientific", and have demanded that it be rejected and a fresh survey be conducted.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, he said members of Parliament were also invited for the meeting, but no one came. "They have given me a request letter. In the letter, most importantly, they demanded that the government should accept the Socio-Economic and Education Survey report and implement it. I want to clarify that this is not a caste survey of backward classes, it is a survey of 7 crore Kannadigas," Siddaramaiah said. He said for the first time in the country such a survey was done in Karnataka, and pointed out that it was carried out by the Congress government, when he was the chief minister earlier. *—PTI*

CBI chargesheet rules out gangrape in RG Kar case

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against the prime accused, Sanjay Roy, in the rape and murder case of a trainee doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, officials said on Monday.

In its chargesheet filed before a special court in Kolkata, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said Roy, who was working as a civic volunteer with the local police, allegedly committed the crime on 9 August when the victim had gone to sleep in the hospital's seminar room during a break, they said.

The agency did not mention the charge of gangrape, indicating that Roy alone committed the crime, according to the officials. Roy had refused to give consent for the narco analysis, following which the CBI could not proceed with the test. *—PTI*

B'luru woman dies as live wire falls on her

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

A 50-year-old woman was electrocuted after a live electric wire allegedly fell on her in Chikkanahalli village near here on Monday, police said. Manjamma was standing on the roadside and talking to two other women when the incident occurred at around 10 am, they said. The entire incident was also captured on a CCTV camera installed in the neigbhourhood. According to police, while the other two managed to escape, Manjamma died on the spot. A case has been registered against BESCOM under section 106 (causing death by negligence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and further investigation is underway, a senior police officer said. *—PTI*

Murugha Mutt seer gets bail in POCSO case

CHITRADURGA, 7 OCT

A court here on Monday granted bail to Murugha Mutt seer Shivamurthy Sharana, following the completion of interrogation of witnesses in the sexual harassment case, lodged against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

He was imprisoned in the Chitradurga district prison after his arrest in September 2022.

The seer's arrest followed complaints of sexual misconduct from girls at a Mutt-run institution, with the help of the Mysuru-based NGO 'Odanadi'.

Although the High Court had initially granted him bail in November 2023, the decision was challenged in the Supreme Court, which had ruled that he would only be released after the interrogation of 13 witnesses. Basavaprabhu Swami, the interim chief of Murugha Mutt, expressed satisfaction with the court's decision, saying, "We are happy that he has finally been released from prison." Sharana was arrested in 2022, followed by the detention of several other individuals connected to the case. Three FIRs were registered against him. The first, filed on August 26, 2022, included charges under POCSO Act.

Another, on 13 October, 2022, was lodged by a cook employed at the Math, alleging that the seer had sexually assaulted four girls, including her daughters. A third case, filed in October 2022, accused the Math of concealing information about minors living on the premises. *—PTI*

Plaint against Byrathi Suresh in MUDA scam

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna on Monday lodged a complaint against Karnataka Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh for allegedly shifting crucial files and documents related to Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam' involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

In his complaint submitted to the Director General of Police Alok Mohan, he also accused the former Superintendent of Police of Lokayukta in Mysuru, Sujeeth of "conniving" with the Minister in shifting the files in July this year, officials said.

A complaint copy was also mailed to the DGP on Sunday seeking investigation into the matter. In the complaint, he alleged that the then Mysuru Lokayukta SP Sujeeth had allegedly alerted the Minister when the MUDA scam surfaced following which the Urban Development Minister flew to Mysuru via helicopter and took away the crucial files and documents related to the scam.

Byrathi Suresh **PHOTO: X/@BYRATHI_SURESH**

Sujeeth had allegedly helped the Minister shift these files.

Recently, the Enforcement Directorate booked Siddaramaiah, his wife and some others in the MUDA land allotment case, taking cognisance of a recent state Lokayukta FIR. *—PTI*

SIT ARRESTS TOP POLICE OFFICER IN BITCOIN SCAM

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed to probe the multi-crore Bitcoin scam on Monday arrested a Deputy Superintendent of Police for allegedly tampering with the evidence, police sources said.

Shridhar Pujar was summoned to the CID office for questioning and was later arrested, they said. Pujar had interrogated the alleged Bitcoin hacker, Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki.

The scam surfaced during the previous BJP regime in 2021, and the Congress then in the opposition had accused the government of trying to cover up the scandal. Sriki, was accused of hacking the State government's e-procurement site and siphoning off over Rs 11.5 crore. *—PTI*

AMERICAN DUO WINS

Nobel Prize goes to microRNA researchers

STOCKHOLM, 7 OCT

The Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine was awarded Monday to Americans Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for their discovery of microRNA, tiny pieces of genetic material that alter how genes work at the cellular level and could lead to new ways of treating cancer.

The Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute, which awarded the prize, said the duo's discovery is "proving to be fundamentally important for how organisms develop and function".

"Their groundbreaking discovery revealed a completely new principle of gene regulation that turned out to be essential for multicellular organisms, including humans," the assembly said in a statement explaining the importance of their work. Ambros performed the research that led to his prize at Harvard University. He is currently a professor of natural science at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Ruvkun's research was performed at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, where he's a professor of genetics, said Thomas Perlmann, Secretary-General of the Nobel Committee. Ambros and Ruvkun, the assembly explained, were initially interested in genes that control the timing of different genetic developments, ensuring that cell types develop at the right time.

Victor Ambros, Gary Ruvkun

PHOTO: X/@KAFKA2KAFKA

To do that, they studied two mutant strains of worms commonly used as research models in science. The two scientists set out to identify the mutated genes responsible in these worms and what their role was. The mechanism they ultimately identified — the regulation of genes by microRNA — has allowed organisms to evolve for hundreds of millions of years.

The Nobel committee said Ambros and Ruvkun's discovery ultimately "revealed a new dimension to gene regulation, essential for all complex life forms".

microRNA provide genetic instructions to tell cells to make new proteins and that there were two main areas where microRNA could be helpful: in developing drugs to treat diseases and in serving as biomarkers. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

BEL receives additional orders worth over ₹500 cr

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) on Monday said that it has secured additional orders of more than Rs 500 crore since its last disclosure on 11 September, 2024. BEL said the major orders received include EMI shelters, AMC for Integrated Air Command and Control System nodes, upgrade/spares for gun systems, spares for radars, communication system, etc. "With these orders, BEL has now accumulated orders totaling Rs 7,689 cr in the current financial year," it added. —*PTI*

Sathya Annapoorna, govt tie up to beat malnutrition

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Sri Sathya Sai Annapoorna Trust on Monday announced its collaboration with the State government and CreditAccess Grameen Limited Foundation to prioritise the needs of malnourished children. The first phase of the collaborative initiative is expected to improve the life of close to 4,000 children in aspirational district of Yadgir along with Chamarajanagar, Bagalkot, Haveri and Dharwad in State, the Trust said in a statement. "In addition to our ongoing support for school-going children, the Trust is now taking a more targeted approach by prioritizing the needs of SAM & MAM children who require high-energy, nutrient-dense food, specifically addressing malnutrition," it said. The critical intervention starts with children aged three to six years in the Anganwadi sections. —*PTI*

HC lawyer calls for abolishing governor system

MYSURU, 7 OCT

Renowned senior High Court advocate and former chairman of the state permanent backward classes commission, Prof R Ravivarma Kumar, called for the abolition of the governor system of administration in India, asserting that it threatens both democracy and the federal structure of India. Speaking at a national seminar on Democracy and the Working of a Federal System in Mysuru, he argued that the appointment of governors and the introduction of GST pose significant threats to the democratic principles and the functioning of the federal system. Kumar emphasised that governors, as constitutional posts, are not elected by the people and are appointed by the President based on recommendations from the Centre. —***Salar News***

Dalit grp flags BJP's 'authoritarian tendencies'

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (DSS) voiced serious concerns over the authoritarian tendencies of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government. During a press conference held on Monday, DSS State Coordinator Guruprasad Keragodu criticised the administration for allegedly undermining constitutional and democratic values since coming to power. Keragodu emphasized that the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity are foundational to the Indian Constitution and democracy, warning that these values are at risk of erosion. "Narendra Modi is acting like a dictator, pushing the agenda of 'one country, one culture, one language, one party, one leader, one election.' This is not a democracy; this is a dictatorship," he stated. He expressed alarm over the BJP's proposal for simultaneous elections for local bodies, state assemblies, and the Lok Sabha, suggesting that such a system could further consolidate power for BJP.—***Salar News***

CM using caste census to get out of MUDA case: HDK

Kumaraswamy accuses CM of staging drama to divert attention

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Monday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of staging "drama" by trying to bring the caste census issue to the forefront, to divert the public attention from the MUDA site allotment case against him.

He hit out at Congress government for trying to mislead the people on the issue to "cover up" their wrongs, as he also raised questions about the relevance of the report that was prepared about ten years ago.

Siddaramaiah today held discussions with ministers and legislators from backward-class communities, where they are said to have deliberated on the Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, popularly known as the "caste census" report, according to official sources.

"If you discuss scientifically, when was the (H) Kantharaju committee (for caste census) formed? It was probably in 2014. It has been ten years. The caste census was done about ten years ago. In ten years, various developments and changes have taken place.... the old census report was kept without releasing it," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, there won't be any benefit to any community from this caste census that was done a decade ago.

"I was blamed (by Congress), stating that I did not allow the report to be released. How long has it been since the report was handed over to Siddaramaiah (by Jayaprakash Hegde committee)? It was given before the Parliament election. Till now there was no noise about it, and now, in the backdrop of the MUDA scam, this government is trying to mislead the people and is trying to take protection in the name of the caste census," he said.

Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes under its then Chairman K Jayaprakash Hegde on 29 February submitted the "fresh" report to Siddaramaiah.

The report— based on data collected from across the state in 2014-15— was submitted amid objections by certain sections of society and also within the ruling Congress.

Karnataka's two dominant communities— Vokkaligas and Lingayats— have expressed reservations about the survey, calling it "unscientific", and have demanded that it be rejected and a fresh survey be conducted.

The then Siddaramaiah-led Congress government (2013-2018) in 2015 commissioned the survey in the state at an estimated cost of Rs 170 crore.

The survey work was completed in 2018, towards the end of Siddaramaiah's first tenure as chief minister, but it was neither accepted nor its findings were made public. —*PTI*

A ROCKY RIDE

Just days after potholes were filled, many roads in the City have started crumbling again. Here is a road at Malagala, Nagarbhavi 2nd Stage in the City ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Leopard leaps at safari bus at BNP, tourists panic

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

A leopard safari at Bannerghatta National Park near here turned quite adventurous for a group of tourists after a big cat suddenly leaped at the window of their bus, leaving them stunned. The incident, which lasted 21 seconds and was captured on video, has gone viral on social media, garnering over 60,000 views on the 'Karnataka Portfolio' Instagram account.

According to park officials, the bus had paused to allow passengers to observe wildlife when the leopard suddenly appeared, pressing its paws against the glass and peering inside. As the leopard attempted to climb onto the vehicle, the driver cautiously moved forward, prompting the big cat to retreat back into its natural habitat.

PHOTO: SALAR

The brief encounter elicited gasps and screams from the startled tourists. Fortunately, the bus's strong fences and glass windows ensured the safety of everyone onboard, with no injuries reported.

AV Surya Sen, IFS and Executive Director of Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP), emphasized that such encounters, while rare, are part of the unpredictable nature of wildlife safaris. "Leopards are curious by nature, and they sometimes approach vehicles out of sheer curiosity," he explained. "Our safari vehicles are designed with the safety of tourists in mind. Thankfully, these leopards are accustomed to human presence from a young age and do not display any aggressive behavior despite the excitement." Mahadev S, Chief Public Relations Officer of BBP, highlighted the importance of respecting wildlife territory. "This is their habitat, and such interactions serve as a reminder of our closeness to nature. Visitors must adhere to guidelines to ensure their safety and the well-being of the animals." —*Salar News*

AFTER DELHI TRIP

Speculations rife as Suresh, Vijayendra meet Jarkiholi

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

State BJP President BY Vijayendra and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother D K Suresh called on State Minister Satish Jarkiholi separately on Monday, triggering political speculation.

These meetings took place in the context of several political interactions usually not seen among the leaders after Lokayukta police registered a case against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the MUDA scam.

These meetings triggered speculation as if they were held to work out a leadership change in Vidhana Soudha.

Vijayendra told reporters that he, as an MLA from Shikaripura, met Jarkiholi to get some public works done in his constituency.

When asked if he had any political discussion with the minister, especially on the possibility of changing the chief minister, Vijayendra said that BJP had been demanding Siddaramaiah to resign and pave the way for a transparent investigation into MUDA scam and the Karnataka Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scam.

Satish Jarkiholi ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

- These meetings assume significance as Jarkiholi recently called on the party president Mallikarjun Kharge and other senior Congress leaders in New Delhi.

Suresh, three-time Congress MP from Bengaluru Rural constituency gave almost a similar explanation for his meeting with Jarkiholi by saying that he met the minister regarding public works in Kanakapura and surrounding places. Reacting to the speculations on the meeting, Jarkiholi asked people not to read too much into his meetings, as the two leaders came to meet him for the public works to be done in their respective constituencies. These meetings assume significance as Jarkiholi recently called on the party president Mallikarjun Kharge and other senior Congress leaders in New Delhi. He also met Home Minister G Parameshwara on Sunday. The Home Minister said that they met as both were in Tumakuru incidentally on the same day. —*PTI*

KSRTC to get 20 luxury buses worth ₹1.7 cr each

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) on Monday announced that it will add 20 luxury— Airavat Club Class 2.0 model buses— each worth Rs 1.78 crore to its fleet by the end of this month.

KSRTC currently has a total of 443 luxury buses, they said.

According to officials, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy accompanied by KSRTC Chairman S R Srinivas (Vasu) visited the Volvo bus manufacturing factory near Hoskote to inspect new buses.

Some of the key features of the bus include -- powerful halogen headlights and daytime running lights with new plush interiors and Scandinavian-style exteriors, offering visually appealing aesthetics, aerodynamic design providing better fuel efficiency, advanced engine technology, delivering superior performance and improved fuel efficiency.

The new bus will have 3.5 per cent increase in overall bus length, providing more space between passenger seats.

"Windshield glass is 9.5 per cent wider, improving driver visibility and reducing blind spots. Larger luggage space, offering 20 per cent more capacity compared to previous buses, making it the first bus with such ample luggage space, pantographic design, making vehicle maintenance easier, rear fog lights for improved safety during nighttime driving, easy-to-reach driver controls and switches for greater driver convenience," the KSRTC said. The bus will also have a fire alarm and Protection System installed for increased passenger safety during emergencies, water pipes with 30 nozzles are installed on both sides of the passenger seats, which activate and spray water during fire accidents. —*PTI*

KHARGE CONFIDENT OF CONG'S WIN IN HARYANA, J&K

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

All India Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday expressed confidence about his party coming to power in Haryana, and the party along with its alliance partner National Conference forming the government in Jammu and Kashmir.

The results of both the assembly elections will be announced on October 8.

Several exit polls have predicted a clear majority for the Congress in Haryana and gave an edge to its alliance with the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, with the regional partner emerging as the single largest party.

Haryana had gone to single phase polls on 5 October, while Jammu and Kashmir voted in three phases on 18, 25 September and 1 October.

Elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir after a gap of 10 years and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, in 2019.

Responding to a question on the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi demanding caste census at the national level, Kharge said, "We had said it during Parliament election too, after taking views from all states, further action has to be taken." Asked whether the much-awaited "caste census" will be implemented in Karnataka, he replied, "Ask the state leaders about it." —*PTI*

JUMBO DHANANJAYA TO LEAD DASARA PROCESSION

Dhananjaya's selection comes after Arjuna's death ***PHOTO: SALAR***

MYSURU, 7 OCT

Tusker Dhananjaya has been chosen as the "Nishane" elephant, leading the historic Jumbo Savari procession on 12 October. Dhananjaya steps into this role, taking over from the tusker Arjuna, who carried the golden howdah seven times before dying away last year.

Dhananjaya's selection comes after Arjuna, revered for his role in the procession, was relieved of his duties and appointed as the "Nishane" elephant. Following Arjuna's death during combing operations in Hassan, Dhananjaya has now been entrusted with this responsibility. In addition to Dhananjaya, Abhimanyu remains a standout performer in terms of weight and stamina among the elephants. —*Salar News*

Cheluva Dasara inaugurated

MYSURU, 7 OCT

State Minister for Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences K Venkatesh inaugurated the three-day Cheluva Chamarajanagar Dasara celebrations on Monday, marking a vibrant addition to the Mysuru festivities.

The celebrations commenced with a pooja at the Chamarajeshwara Temple at 12.15pm. He also opened the Mahila Dasara exhibition, showcasing and selling homemade products crafted by women's self-help groups. Throughout the three days, cultural events will be hosted across various venues, including the JH Patel Auditorium, Dr Rajkumar Rangamandir. —*Salar News*

Over 4,000 yoga enthusiasts gathered at the Mysuru Palace premises on Monday to participate in the Yoga Dasara event organised by the Yoga Dasara Sub Committee. The participants formed a unique yoga chain with the theme of "Yoga for Democracy," braving the chilly weather to perform various asanas from 6am to 8am. ***PHOTO: SALAR***

FIR filed against Alt-News' Zubair over Yati video

GHAZIABAD/ LUCKNOW/ SAHARANPUR, 7 OCT

An FIR was filed here on Monday against Alt-News co-founder Mohammad Zubair for allegedly promoting enmity among religious groups and other offences following a complaint by an aide of controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand, according to police.

Narsinghanand is facing multiple FIRs and protests from Muslim groups against his alleged remarks against Prophet Muhammad.

In her complaint to Kavinagar police, Udita Tyagi, General Secretary of Yati Narsimahanand Saraswati Foundation, has alleged that Zubair posted a video clipping of an old programme of Narsinghanand

A large crowd had gathered outside the Dasna Devi temple in Ghaziabad, which Narsinghanand heads, to protest against him on Friday after videos of his inflammatory remarks appeared online,

Mohammad Zubair ***PHOTO: PTI***

following which security was stepped up around the premises. Ten people have been arrested so far for allegedly pelting stones during the protest, according to police.

Protests were held on Monday in several parts of Uttar Pradesh, including the Aligarh Muslim University, demanding arrest and strict punishment for Narshinganand. Also, Uttar Pradesh police arrested 13 people in Saharanpur for stone pelting at the Sheikhpura Qadeem police post during a protest on Sunday, and another four for violence on Friday outside the Dasna Devi temple in Ghaziabad which is headed by Narsinghanand. —*PTI*

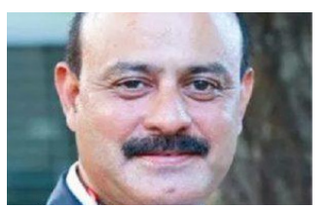
6 BOOKED FOR BLACKMAIL

Missing bizman found dead near M'luru

MANGALURU, 7 OCT

The body of younger brother of former Karnataka MLA Mohideen Bava has been found in Phalguni river mouth on Monday after 12 hours of search, police said.

BM Mumtaz Ali, 52, was reported missing since Sunday and his badly damaged car was found abandoned near Kulur bridge, they said.



BM Mumtaz Ali ***PHOTO: PTI***

An FIR had already been registered at Kavoor police station against six accused, including a woman, who had allegedly threatened, blackmailed, and extorted lakhs of rupees from Ali. Ali, a prominent businessman and chairman of the Misbah Group of Educational Institutions, is a well-known figure in the local community.

According to police, he left his residence in his vehicle around 3 am on Sunday, roaming around the city before parking near the Kullur Bridge around 5 am.

Alarmed by his last communication, his daughter immediately contacted the local police. His disappearance prompted a large-scale search operation, with family members, including Bawa, present at the scene, police said. The body was taken to the city's AJ Hospital for postmortem, police said. —*PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

Waiting, says Wangchuk as he stays put at Ladakh

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Monday said he and his supporters will stay put at the Ladakh Bhawan till the authorities tell them when they will be able to country's top leadership. He said the protesters, who are demanding the inclusion of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, are not asking for anything unusual and are here to remind the ruling BJP of its poll promise. Wangchuk and his supporters began their indefinite fast at the Ladakh Bhawan on Sunday. "We are going to sit here till we get a reply on when we will be able to meet our leaders. We walked for 30-32 days, we deserve to get a meeting at least," Wangchuk told PTI. The people of Ladakh had welcomed the government's decision to make it a union territory because they were promised a legislature, climate activist said. —*PTI*

PM shares 'garba' song as tribute to Goddess Durga

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday shared on X a 'garba' song he wrote as a tribute to Goddess Durga. "It is the auspicious time of Navratri and people are celebrating in different ways, united by their devotion to Maa Durga. In this spirit of reverence and joy, here is Aavati Kalay, a Garba I wrote as a tribute to Her power and grace. May Her blessings always remain upon us," he wrote on X. He thanked Purva Mantri, whom he lauded as a talented upcoming singer, for singing the garba song and presenting such a melodious rendition of it. Garba is a Gujarati dance which is performed during Navaratri. —*PTI*

UP minister's brother files case against SP leaders

LUCKNOW, 7 OCT

After days of bitter social media exchanges between Uttar Pradesh minister A K Sharma'a office and the Samajwadi Party's Media Cell, his brother has filed a case in Mau district against opposition party members and its X handle for "defaming" the BJP leader. The exchange of barbs over various issues -- such as power, cleanliness, law and order and corruption -- between Sharma's office and the SP Media Cell began on October 1 on social media platform X. The conversation turned ugly and abusive on 5 October as unparliamentary language was used when issues related to urban development and electricity -- the minister's portfolios -- were raised. The FIR was registered at Sarai Lakhansi police station in Mau district on Sunday. Reacting to the post, the SP Media Cell wondered if by getting an FIR filed through his brother, the minister has proved that the "news about corruption" against him is true. —*PTI*

Land-for-jobs case: Lalu Prasad, sons granted bail

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

A Delhi court on Monday granted bail to RJD chief and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad and his sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav in the land-for-jobs money laundering case. Special Judge Vishal Gogne granted the relief to the accused persons on a personal bond of Rs one lakh each, noting that they were not arrested during the investigation. The accused appeared before the court in pursuance to summons issued to them by the court earlier. The judge had issued the summons after taking cognisance of a supplementary chargesheet against the accused persons. —*PTI*

India, Maldives tie up for maritime cooperation

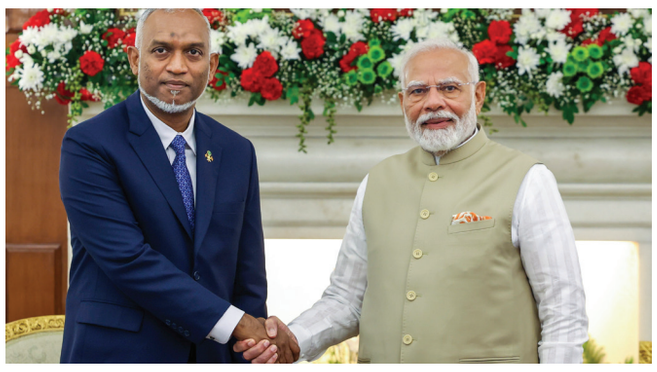
India to support Maldives with defence platforms

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India and the Maldives, as "natural partners", on Monday resolved to work together in advancing maritime and security cooperation for the benefit of peoples of both the countries as well as the Indian Ocean Region.

A vision document, which was issued after bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu here, also said the two countries share common challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

The document -- India and Maldives: A Vision for Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership -- said that the two sides agreed to "inaugurate at an early date the state-of-the-art Maldivian Ministry of Defence (MoD) building in Male, constructed with India's assistance, that will augment modern infrastructural capacity of the MoD".



President of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

India and the Maldives share common challenges in the Indian Ocean Region which have multi-dimensional implications for the security and development of both the countries, it said.

"As natural partners, they resolve to work together in advancing the maritime and security cooperation for the benefit of peoples of both India and Maldives as well as for the larger Indian Ocean Region," the two countries said in the document.

The Maldives, with its vast Exclusive Economic Zone, is exposed to traditional and non-traditional maritime challenges including piracy, IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, drug smuggling, and terrorism.

The two countries agreed that India, as "a trusted and dependable partner", will work closely with Maldives in sharing of expertise, augmenting capabilities and undertake joint cooperative measures, as per needs and requirements of the island nation.

New Delhi and Male also agreed to support the Maldives with provisioning of defence platforms and assets to augment capabilities of MNDF as well as that of the government of Maldives in advancing its maritime and security requirements. —*PTI*

SETBACK FOR OPPN

Harshvardhan Patil with party Chief Sharad Pawar *PHOTO: PTI*

Ahead of M'rashtra polls, ex-BJP's Patil joins NCP (SP)

INDAPUR, 7 OCT

Former Maharashtra minister Harshvardhan Patil joined the opposition NCP (SP) on Monday, days after quitting BJP.

Patil was inducted into the NCP (SP) in the presence of party chief Sharad Pawar.

The former MLA said his supporters wanted him to contest the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections from Indapur seat (in Pune district), which he had earlier represented, and asserted people are important than political party in a democracy.

Indapur comes under the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency. Meanwhile, Shiv Sena leader Dipesh Pundlik Mhatre, the former chairman of the Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation's (KDMC) standing committee, has joined the Shiv Sena (UBT) led by Uddhav Thackeray.

Six other former KDMC corporators also joined the Thackeray-led party along with Mhatre. —*PTI*

'JMM PATRONISING INFILTRATION, BJP TO IMPLEMENT NRC'

RANCHI, 7 OCT

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday accused the JMM-led government of "patronising" Bangladeshi infiltrators and said that BJP would implement National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state if voted to power.

He claimed that 'mati' (land), 'beti' (daughter) and 'roti' (bread) in Jharkhand are in danger.

" BJP is not concerned about coming to power only. In Jharkhand 'maati', 'beti', 'roti' are in danger because of infiltration. It is our pledge to protect them," the Union Agriculture minister said at Ranchi's Birsa Munda Airport while leaving for Delhi.

Chouhan, alleged there has been infiltration from foreign land. —*PTI*

AAP MP Sanjeev Arora's home raided

JALANDHAR, 7 OCT

Enforcement Directorate on Monday searched multiple locations in Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Gurugram and Delhi in connection with a land "fraud" case against AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora and others, official sources said.

About 16-17 locations, including the house of the 61-year-old MP at Ludhiana (Punjab) and Gurugram (Haryana), are being searched, they said.

Premises linked to real estate businessman Hemant Sood and another person, Chandra Shekhar Agrawal, in Jalandhar are also among the locations being searched.

Arora said he doesn't exactly know the reason that warranted the searches.

God is with the party. There is no need to be scared... no wrong has been done.

-Arvind Kejriwal, Party Convenor

"I am a law abiding citizen, am not sure about the reason for search operation, will cooperate fully with agencies and make sure all their queries are answered," he posted on X.

It is alleged, according to the sources, that Arora transferred an industrial plot in the name of his company in an "illegal" manner. —*PTI*

KEEPING FRIENDS CLOSE

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Naxals big violators of human rights: Shah

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Terming Naxals the biggest human rights violators, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said security forces have been carrying out "offensive operations" instead of defensive against the insurgents and have achieved big successes in recent times.

Addressing chief ministers and top officials of the Naxal-affected states, Shah also said that all Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected states are committed to completely eliminating Naxalism by March 2026.

Due to the improved security situation, high voter turnout -- up to 70 per cent -- was witnessed in the Maoist-hit region in the last Lok Sabha polls. There was zero polling in the region earlier, he said.

Shah said more than 13,000 people from the northeast, Kashmir and LWE-affected areas have renounced violence and joined the mainstream.

The crucial meeting, which discussed anti-Naxal operations and development initiatives carried out in the affected areas, came days after the security forces killed 31 ultras in the forests of Chhattisgarh in one of the most successful operations in recent times.

To completely eradicate Naxalism, Shah said, it is essential to give a final push to eliminate this menace once and for all and urged the chief ministers of all affected states to review the progress of development and anti-Naxal operations at least once a month.

Describing Naxals as the biggest hurdle to development, he said they are the biggest human rights violators who have been depriving over eight crore people, especially the tribals, of development and basic welfare opportunities. —*PTI*

Docs to hold rally today as fast enters day 3

KOLKATA, 7 OCT

Agitating junior doctors in West Bengal continued their fast-unto-death for the third consecutive day on Monday, demanding justice for the rape and murder of a woman medic of the RG Kar hospital and workplace safety even as the state government remained silent to address their issues.

The medics also announced organising a rally in Kolkata from central Kolkata's College Square to Dharmatala at around 4.30 PM on Tuesday to press for their demands.

"Tomorrow we will also be holding a symbolic hunger strike at all medical colleges and hospitals across the state. Representatives of various doctors' associations will take part in it.

This will start at 9 AM Tuesday and will continue till 9 PM. We will also hold a rally in Kolkata. We, on behalf of the West Bengal Junior Doctors' Forum, invite all those who have been beside us since Day 1 of our protest," one junior medic said.

Senior doctors join junior doctors' protest against the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder incident, in Kolkata, Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

Cal HC refuses to hear at present PIL seeking medics' sit-in venue be shifted

C3alcutta High Court on Monday refused to take up for hearing at present a PIL seeking that a sit-in by junior doctors at Esplanade be shifted to a side of the thoroughfare, on the claim that its present position was affecting movement of traffic.

A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam refused to take up the PIL for hearing, saying that the R G Kar rape-murder case was being heard by the Supreme Court. —*PTI*

ITS CM VS LOP

Kerala Assembly adjourned after protest

T'PURAM, 7 OCT

Kerala Assembly was adjourned for the day on Monday after a protest on the floor of the House following an intense verbal spat between Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan who traded charges.

Angry opposition members climbed the podium of Speaker AN Shamseer who tried to conduct the business amid the ruckus, and even held a black banner preventing the House from seeing his face.

The heated war of words between the CM and the LoP escalated after Vijayan strongly criticised the latter for attacking the chair.

The controversy began when Satheesan announced the boycott of question hour, protesting the conversion of 49 starred questions into non-starred ones.

Watch and Ward personnel had to forcibly push MLA Mathew Kuzhalnadan (Congress) away when he tried to enter the Speaker's dias amidst the melee.

PHOTO: ANI

A visibly angry CM rose and said blocking the Speaker's sight with banners cannot be allowed in the House at any cost.

The slogans in the banner, linking him to the RSS, also seemed to have irked the CM.

The second day of the session commenced on a stormy note with the Opposition Congress-led UDF members expressing displeasure to Speaker Shamseer over the altering of 49 starred questions into non-starred ones.

After boycotting the question hour, the opposition members returned to the House just before the beginning of the zero hour. — *PTI*

Muslim panel files plaint against Jaleel

Malappuram, 7 Oct

The Muslim Youth League, the youth wing of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), lodged a complaint with the police on Monday seeking action against Left MLA K T Jaleel for his controversial statement linking gold smuggling through Karipur airport to the Muslim community. A Youth League leader said that its Tirurangadi constituency committee lodged the complaint with the District Police Chief. —*PTI*

AAP worker shot dead in Punjab; BJP worker shot at

TARN TARAN, 7 OCT

An Aam Aadmi Party worker was shot dead allegedly by three unidentified persons here on Monday, police said. The deceased was identified as Rajvinder Singh, a resident of Talwandi Mour Singh village, they added.

Three unidentified assailants, who were on a motorcycle, intercepted Singh's car near Takkarpur village and allegedly fired at him and fled the spot, the police said.

Singh was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to bullet injuries, they added.

Meanwhile, two bike-borne men allegedly shot at a 30-year-old BJP worker outside a polling booth here on the voting day in Haryana on 5 October, leaving him hospitalised with an injury in the waist, police have said.

They said the incident happened on Saturday when Rajnish, who has also been associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh for the past 14 years, was sitting near the Nidhi Public School with a table and people were waiting during the polling exercise.

Police said the BJP worker was hit in the waist and has been hospitalised.

Rajnish is a resident of the Bharat Colony in the Faridabad assembly constituency and his house is on the 33 Feet Road.

After learning about the incident, former cabinet minister and BJP candidate from the Faridabad assembly seat Vipul Goyal visited the hospital to enquire about Rajnish's health.

He said that action should be taken against those involved. Whether the victim is a BJP worker or a member of any other party, the law gives the same protection to everybody, he said.

Komal Pandit, an eyewitness, said people were standing outside the Nidhi Public School when the two men came on a motorbike.

He said he couldn't see who fired the shot. He said Rajinish was involved in some "minor incident" earlier in the day. —*PTI*

HC to hear bail pleas of Umar, Sharjeel on 25 Nov

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Delhi High Court will hear on 25 November the bail plea of former JNU student Umar Khalid and student activist Sharjeel Imam in a UAPA case related to the alleged larger conspiracy behind the communal riots here in February 2020. The two bail pleas, along with similar pleas by other co-accused in the case United Against Hate founder Khalid Saifi and others were on Monday listed for fresh hearing before a bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur. The bench, however, did not assemble. Khalid, Imam and several others have been booked for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured. The violence had erupted during the protests against the CAA and NRC.—*PTI*

TN blames heat for deaths at IAF air show

Oppn bashes DMK for poor arrangements, crowd management & inadequate police force

CHENNAI, 7 OCT

Five deaths that occurred after the Indian Air Force's air show on the Marina beach on Sunday were related to heat issues, and they were all brought dead to the government facilities, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian said on Monday and appealed to the political parties and media not to politicise the issue.

Of the nearly 100 people admitted to the government hospitals close to Marina beach, 7 were undergoing treatment, and 93 people were treated as out-patients. Five people were brought dead to the hospitals, Subramanian stated.

The condition of those undergoing treatment at the hospitals was stable, he said and added that there was no stampede while the spectators started leaving for home at the same time.

"We don't deny the deaths, which were all related to heat conditions as the people remained under the hot sun from 11 am till one pm. Let me make it clear, we made arrangements anticipating 15 lakh people for the IAF's 92nd Day celebrations and even provided more than what the IAF had sought," the Minister told reporters here.

The timing for the two-hours air show (from 11 am to 1 pm) was decided by the IAF based on weather conditions and the IAF had advised people to bring umbrellas, wear caps and cooling glasses and also bring water bottles with them, he said.

"The IAF had requested us to ready 100 beds, an ICU facility with 20 beds besides keeping a blood bank on alert to respond to any emergency. But we arranged 4,000 beds at five government medical college hospitals in the vicinity," Subramanian said refuting the opposition parties' charge of inadequate arrangements.

Apart from drafting 1,000 doctors, paramedical staff and stationing 40 ambulances, steps were taken to provide basic amenities including drinking water in association with other government departments.

AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami condemned the DMK government for inadequate planning and poor crowd management, laying the blame squarely on Chief Minister MK Stalin's administration.

"Administrative arrangements and crowds were not managed properly, and the police force was inadequate. The news is shocking that people were stuck in heavy traffic, with no drinking water available, and many were hospitalised due to heatstroke. Five people have died so far," Palaniswami posted on X.—*PTI*

With temperature soaring and no public transport, hundreds had to walk 3 to 4km on the jam-packed roads to get any public conveyance or pick up their vehicles **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: PTI

6 killed in Birbhum coal mine blast

KOLKATA, 7 OCT

Six people were killed and several others injured in a coal mine blast in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Monday, police said. However, West Bengal Power Development Corporation Ltd (WBPDCL) claimed that five people lost their lives due to the blast in its mine. The incident happened around 10.30 am in Bhadulia block, a police officer said. "So far, we have recovered three bodies. Rescue operations are on," he said. The explosion occurred when detonators were being transported for planned blasts at the Gangaramchak and Gangaramchak-Bhadulia coal mines, a WBPDCL official said. A mine developer and operator (MDO) runs operations at the captive block.—*PTI*

1 killed, 2 injured over Durga pooja clash in Tripura

AGARTALA, 7 OCT

One person was killed and two others were injured in clashes between two communities over collection of Durga pooja subscriptions in North Tripura district, police said Monday. Eight people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the clashes on Sunday at Kamatala market and its adjacent areas. Personnel of Assam Rifles and Tripura State Rifles (TSR) have been deployed in sensitive areas of Kadamtala, he said, adding that senior police officials are camping there. During the clashes, two houses were vandalised by the mob and heavy police deployment was made to bring the situation under control, the SP said. —*PTI*

Security forces seize huge cache of arms in Manipur

IMPHAL, 7 OCT

Security forces seized a huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosives during search operations in Manipur's Kakching and Thoubal districts, a police statement said on Monday. The security forces during search operations and area domination on 5 October at Wabagai Natekhong Turenmei area of Kakching seized three carbines with magazine, one air gun rifle and 9 mm pistol, two single barrel guns, 14 grenades without detonators, one 51 mm mortar, two MK-III grenade, a suspected container weighing 4.755kg explosive IED, the statement said. During another operation on Saturday at Chingkham Ching area in Thoubal district, security forces seized one SMG carbine along with magazine and SSBL along with a .32 pistol. One 81 mm mortar shell, four hand grenades, three detonators, 45 live ammunition, five green grenades, seven tear smoke grenades, 11 tear smoke shells, two stun shells (normal), and others were also seized, it added.—*PTI*

Girl raped in MP fights for life; accused arrested

PHOTO: PTI

DINDORI, 7 OCT

A six-year-old girl was raped allegedly by a man residing in her neighbourhood in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district, police said on Monday.

The girl's condition was serious and she was referred to a hospital in Jabalpur, they said, adding the 21-year-old accused has been arrested.

The incident took place on Sunday under Shahpura police station area, an official said.

The victim was staying with her maternal grandparents. While she was alone at home, the accused entered the house and raped her, Shahpura police station in-charge Shivlal Markam said.

The victim's grandmother was working in the backyard and her grandfather was also not at home, he said.

A girl in the neighbourhood saw the victim lying injured and informed her grandmother, the official said.

The victim was bleeding from her private parts when her grandmother reached there, he said. The woman subsequently approached police.

The victim was immediately taken to the district hospital from where she was referred to a medical facility in Jabalpur due to her serious condition, the official said.

—*PTI*

2 accused of sexually harassing girls nabbed after encounter

Deoria, 7 Oct

Two people accused of sexually harassing two girls while they were returning from school last week were arrested on Monday after an encounter which left them injured in their legs. Accused Dheeraj Patel and Riti allegedly fired shots when a police team surrounded them acting on a tip-off. In the exchange of fire that ensued, both of them received bullet injuries in their legs.

Kolkata cop arrested for molesting volunteer

Kolkata, 7 Oct

A sub-inspector of Park Street police station here was arrested on Monday for sexually assaulting a woman civic volunteer, a senior officer said. The sub-inspector, who had been "closed" (benched) by Kolkata Police, was taken into custody following a departmental inquiry. The incident occurred around 1.10am on 5 October, when the woman civic volunteer was called to the restroom on the fourth floor of the station.

Body of 10-yr-old girl taken to JNM Hospital for post-mortem

Kolkata, 7 Oct

The body of the 10-year-old girl, who was raped and murdered at Kultuli in West Bengal was on Monday taken to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial (JNM) Hospital in Kalyani for post mortem. Calcutta High Court ordered that the post-mortem of the girl be conducted at AIIMS Kalyani. "There are some technical drawbacks at AIIMS because of which the post-mortem will be conducted at JNM," the officer told PTI. The girl was raped and murdered while returning to home after attending tuition classes.

DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY

People dressed in traditional attire participate in the 'Abhivyakti Garba Mahostav' organised on the occasion of Navratri festival, in Jaipur, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

HEMA PANEL REPORT

SIT quizzes Sidhique over rape allegations

T'PURAM, 7 OCT

Malayalam film actor Sidhique appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Monday for questioning in connection with a rape case registered against him.

The SIT, led by an IPS officer, is currently interrogating Sidhique at the Cantonment police station here.

In her complaint, a young female actor alleged that Sidhique sexually assaulted her at a hotel in Thiruvanan thapuram under the pretext of offering her a role in a film.

Supreme Court had granted Sidhique interim protection from arrest last week, after the Kerala High Court rejected his anticipatory bail plea.

High Court had cited the seriousness of the accusations and the need for custodial interrogation, while dismissing his bail plea.

PHOTO: PTI

Sidhique has been booked under Sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

He claims the complainant has been harassing him with false accusations since 2019.

This case is part of a broader investigation into allegations of sexual harassment against prominent Malayalam film personalities, following the Justice K Hema Committee report on sexual crimes against female actors.

Multiple FIRs have been registered in connection with these allegations. —*PTI*

TATA DUBS HOSPITALISATION AS RUMOUR

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Veteran industrialist and Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata on Monday said there is no cause for concern regarding his health and he is undergoing check-ups for age-related medical conditions. Terming as "rumour" reports of his hospitalisation in a Mumbai hospital, in a post on social media platform X, 86-year-old Tata said, "these claims are unfounded".

"I am currently undergoing medical check-ups due to my age-related medical conditions," he asserted.

"There is no cause for concern. I remain in good spirits," he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

IMD ISSUES YELLOW ALERT FOR 6 KERALA DISTRICTS

T'PURAM, 7 OCT

India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued yellow alerts for six districts in Kerala for Monday as moderate rainfall continues across the state, officials said here.

As per the district rainfall forecast issued on Sunday, a yellow alert has been issued for Thiruvananthapuram, Idukki, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Wayanad districts for Monday.

The weather office also forecast thunderstorms accompanied by light to moderate rainfall, ranging from 5-15 mm per hour, and gusty winds with speeds reaching 40 km/h in parts of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, and Kottayam districts.

Meanwhile, several parts of the state received significant rainfall until 5.30pm on Sunday, according to data from the IMD.

Manual observatories recorded 93 mm of rainfall in Kannur Airport, followed by 28 mm in Palakkad, 13 mm in Karipur Airport, and 7 mm each in Alappuzha and Kannur. Punalur reported 5 mm of rain, it said. Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and Automated Rain Gauges (ARG) reported 71 mm in Anakkayam (Malappuram district), 64 mm in Panniyoor (Kannur district), and 62.5 mm in Panathur (Kasaragod district). —*PTI*

Follow labour laws: Kerala CM over EY worker death

T'PURAM, 7 OCT

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday stressed on the need to ensure that labour laws are strictly adhered to in all sectors of the country.

Employees are subjected to restless work, threats of dismissal and denial of labour rights in some sectors including the IT sector in the country, he told the state Assembly.

He was replying to a Calling Attention motion moved in the House regarding the recent death of Anna Sebastian, a 26-year-old chartered accountant who allegedly died due to work-related stress four months after joining Ernst & Young (EY) in Pune.

Vijayan stated that the lease agreement signed with the companies operating in the IT parks in the state stipulates that all labour laws in the state must be followed.

Although more companies have introduced the work-from-home system during the post-Covid period, the existing labour laws do not mention its time frame.The firm, however, denied the allegations.

The young woman, who passed the CA exams in 2023, died in July. —*PTI*

Man bludgeons 2 to death, injures 2 at Nagpur rly stn

NAGPUR, 7 OCT

Two people were killed and two others sustained injuries when a man attacked people sleeping on a platform at Nagpur railway station in Maharashtra on Monday morning, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said.

In an unprovoked attack, the man allegedly bludgeoned the victims with a concrete sleeper (a 50 kg slab used on railway tracks) while they were asleep on platform no. 6 in the early hours of the day, an official said. A patrolling team of the GRP heard the screams and rushed to the scene. They took the accused, Jai Kumar Kewat, 45, into custody, he said.

Ganesh Kumar, 40, a resident of Tamil Nadu, and an unidentified destitute man, died in the attack.

Two others sustained serious injuries and are undergoing treatment at Mayo Hospital, the official said. —*PTI*

'POTENTIAL RISK'

DGCA warns of jammed rudder on Boeing 737, puts airlines on alert

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Aviation regulator DGCA on Monday issued an advisory to Indian airlines operating Boeing 737 planes regarding the potential risk of a jammed rudder control system.

The move follows the recent probe report by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) that highlighted safety concerns involving Boeing 737 aircraft lanes equipped with Collins Aerospace SVO-730 Rudder Rollout Guidance Actuators.

Against the backdrop of the potential risk of a jammed or restricted rudder control system, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued safety recommendations to the Indian carriers.

Currently, Air India Express, Akasa Air and SpiceJet operate Boeing 737 planes. DGCA said all flight crews are to be informed through a circular/advisory regarding the possibility of a jammed or restricted rudder control system.

Further, all operators have been asked to conduct a safety risk assessment for aircraft to evaluate and mitigate the risk associated with the rudder control system.

The regulator also said that all Category III B approach, landing, and rollout operations, including practice or actual autoland, must be discontinued for these planes until further notice. Category III B pertains to operations in low visibility conditions.

Among other measures, airlines have been asked to mandatorily include discussion about potential rudder control system issues as a mandatory topic in recurrent training sessions.

It will also be included in the Instrument Rating/ Proficiency Checks (IR/PPC) during pre-simulator briefings.

"Operators have been instructed to include specific exercises in Recurrent Training and IR/PPC that simulate scenarios involving a jammed or restricted rudder control system, including rollout procedures.

"Appropriate flight crew responses and mitigations should be practised during these exercises," the regulator said in a release. —*PTI*

The potentially faulty actuators are installed only on Boeing 737NG and 737 MAX aircrafts **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

A YEAR OF DESTRUCTION

Decades needed to rebuild Gaza after Israel's assault

There are hills of rubble where apartment blocks stood, and pools of sewage-tainted water spreading disease. City streets have been churned into dirt canyons and, in many places, the air is filled with the stench of unrecovered corpses.

Israel's yearlong assault on Gaza, one of the deadliest and most destructive in recent history, has killed more than 41,000 people, a little over half of them women and children, according to local health officials. With no end in sight to the war and no plan for the day after, it is impossible to say when – or even if – anything will be rebuilt.

Even after the fighting stops, hundreds of thousands of people could be stuck living in squalid tent camps for years. Experts say reconstruction could take decades.

"This war is destruction and misery. It would make the stones cry out," said Shifaa Hejjo, a 60-year-old housewife living in a tent pitched on land where her home once stood. "Whoever sees Gaza ... It will make them cry."

Israel blames the destruction on Hamas. Israel says Hamas embedded much of its military infrastructure, including hundreds of kilometers (miles) of tunnels, in densely populated areas where some of the heaviest battles were fought.

The fighting left roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza destroyed or severely damaged, according to a UN assessment in September based on satellite footage. It said around 66 per cent of structures, including more than 2,27,000 housing units, had sustained at least some damage.

If there's a ceasefire, around half of all families "have nowhere to go back to," said Alison Ely, a Gaza-based coordinator with the Shelter Cluster, an international coalition of aid providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The devastation in Gaza rivals front-line towns in Ukraine

Almost as many buildings have been destroyed or damaged in Gaza as in all of Ukraine after its first two years of war with Russia, according to Corey Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek, US-based researchers who use satellite radar to document the wars' devastation.

To put that into perspective: Gaza is less than half the size of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

The amount of destruction in central and southern Gaza alone, Scher said, is roughly equivalent to what was lost in the front-line town of Bakhmut, the scene of one of the deadliest battles in the Ukraine war and where Russian forces destroyed nearly every building in their path to force Ukrainian troops to withdraw. The destruction in northern Gaza is even worse, he said.

The fighting has left roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza destroyed or severely damaged **PHOTO: PTI**

Gaza's water and sanitation system has collapsed. More than 80 per cent of its health facilities — and even more of its roads— are damaged or destroyed. At the end of January, the World Bank estimated $18.5 billion of damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

'I couldn't tell where people's homes were'

When Israeli ground forces pushed into the southern city of Khan Younis in January, Shifaa Hejjo and her family fled their four-story home with only the clothes they were wearing.

They spent months in various tent camps before she decided to return – and the sight brought her to tears.

Her entire neighbourhood had been destroyed, her former home and the roads leading to it lost in a sea of rubble.

"I didn't recognise it," she said. "I couldn't tell where people's homes were."

Around 90 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced by the war, often multiple times, according to UN estimates. Hundreds of thousands have crowded into sprawling tent camps near the coast with no electricity, running water or toilets. Hunger is widespread.

Hejjo lived in a tent in the courtyard of a hospital. Before that, she was in Muwasi, the main tent camp in southern Gaza.

"It smelled bad," she said. "There were diseases spreading."

She said her husband, who was suffering from liver disease, was broken-hearted when he heard their home had been destroyed and he died shortly thereafter.

She was among the first to return after Israeli forces withdrew in April. Her neighbors stayed away, fearful they would find bodies or unexploded bombs.

But for her it was still home.

"It is better to live in my home, where I lived for 37 years, even though it is destroyed," she said.

Hejjo and her children dug through the rubble with shovels and their bare hands, going brick by brick and saving whatever could be reused. Torn clothes were used to feed cooking fires.

Rats had crept in, and swarms of mosquitoes hovered over the ruins. There was broken glass everywhere. They set up a tent fortified by corrugated metal sheeting and some bricks salvaged from her destroyed home. A light drizzle wet their clothes as they slept.

UN agencies say unemployment has soared to around 80 per cent— up from nearly 50 per cent before the war — and that almost the entire population is living in poverty. Even those with means would find it nearly impossible to import construction materials because of Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of law and order. There are mountains of rubble, little water and no electricity

The first obstacle to any significant rebuilding is the rubble – mountains of it.

Where houses, shops and office buildings once stood, there are now giant drifts of rubble laced with human remains, hazardous substances and unexploded munitions.

The UN estimates the war has left some 40 million tons of debris and rubble in Gaza, enough to fill New York's Central Park to a depth of 8m. It could take up to 15 years and nearly $650 million to clear it all away, it said.

There's also the question of where to dispose of it: The UN estimates about 50sq km of land would be needed, which will be hard to come by in the small and densely populated territory.

It isn't just homes that were destroyed, but also critical infrastructure.

The UN estimates nearly 70 per cent of Gaza's water and sanitation plants have been destroyed or damaged. That includes all five of the territory's wastewater treatment facilities, plus desalination plants, sewage pumping stations, wells and reservoirs.

The employees who once managed municipal water and waste systems have been displaced, and some killed. And fuel shortages have made it difficult to keep operating facilities that are still intact.

The international charity Oxfam said it applied in December for a permit to bring in desalination units, and pipes to repair water infrastructure. It took three months for Israel to approve the shipment, but it still has not entered Gaza, Oxfam said.

The destruction of sewage networks has left streets flooded with putrid water, hastening the spread of disease.

There has been no central power in Gaza since the opening days of the war, when its sole power plant was forced to shut down for lack of fuel, and more than half of the territory's electrical grid has been destroyed, according to the World Bank. Wealthy Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have said they are only willing to contribute to Gaza's reconstruction as part of a postwar settlement that creates a path to a Palestinian state. Rebuilding Gaza would also require the import of massive amounts of construction supplies and heavy equipment, which Israel is unlikely to allow as long as there's a potential for Hamas to rebuild its militant infrastructure. In any case, Gaza has only a small number of crossings with limited capacity. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

Rice battle heats up as India, Pak lift export curbs

The global prices for different varieties of rice dropped on Monday after India and Pakistan made tit-for-tat moves to eliminate price caps and resume rice exports.

On 28 September, the Indian government lifted a ban on the export of non-Basmati white rice more than a year after it blocked overseas sales, with a larger crop yield in 2024 bolstering state warehouse reserves for domestic needs.

This decision followed Pakistan's announcement a day earlier to withdraw the minimum export price (MEP) for all rice varieties, a measure that had been in place since 2023 and set at $1,300 per metric tonne for Basmati rice, and $550 for non-Basmati rice.

Pakistan's decision was influenced by India's earlier removal of the MEP of $950 per metric tonne for Basmati rice in September.

India and Pakistan are the only countries that produce Basmati rice, known as "scented pearl", for its unique flavour and aroma.

In a notification issued on 28 September, Jam Kamal Khan, Pakistan's commerce minister, said the government acted on a request from the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) to eliminate the MEP.

Khan said the price floor was introduced last year in response to rising global rice prices and India's export ban on non-Basmati rice, which was followed by New Delhi imposing some restrictions on the export of Basmati rice in August 2023.

With those bans, Pakistan in effect became the only exporter of Basmati rice – allowing it to charge top dollar through the MEP.

"However, with the recent decline in international rice prices and India lifting its export ban, the MEP has become an obstacle for Pakistani rice exporters to remain competitive in global markets," the minister said.

Khan projected that the move could boost Pakistan's rice exports, potentially reaching $5bn in revenue this financial year. That will not be easy, however – because unlike last year, point out analysts, Pakistani rice will once again face off against its Indian competitor. And the Pakistani government's decision to lift the minimum price on exports has upset many rice growers.

The battle for the rice market

India is the world's largest rice exporter, accounting for nearly 40 percent of global rice trade and holding a 65 percent market share in the Basmati sector.

India and Pakistan are the only countries that produce Basmati rice known for its unique flavour and aroma

Pakistan, the fourth-largest rice exporter after Thailand and Vietnam, retains the remaining 35 percent of the Basmati market.

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, India earned more than $11bn from rice sales, with more than 4.5 million metric tonnes of Basmati rice alone generating more than $4.7bn.

But in July 2023, high inflation, rising food prices, and concerns about potential production shortages caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon made the Indian government impose an export ban on non-Basmati rice, less than a year before national elections. This variety of rice is what India's public distribution system relies on to fulfil domestic demand. A month later, India also imposed curbs on Basmati exports.

An unintended beneficiary? Pakistani rice exports.

As Indian rice became scarce, Pakistan emerged as one of the alternative suppliers for many countries, including those in the Gulf, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

From July 2023 to June 2024, Pakistan experienced more than 60 percent growth in its rice export volume and a 78 percent increase in value, generating nearly $3.9bn from the export of almost six million metric tonnes of rice, including about 750,000 metric tonnes of Basmati rice.

However, Chela Ram Kewlani, a former chairman of REAP, says now with Indian rice coming back to the international market in large volume, imposing a MEP would hurt Pakistani rice exports.

"International market demand and supply is what regulates the rice price and now with India back in the business, our exports could have been impacted if we still had a MEP in place," he told Al Jazeera.

Haseeb Khan, senior vice chairperson of REAP, also praised the government's decision to lift the price cap, stating it would help Pakistani exporters strengthen their presence in new markets.

"We have found buyers in Indonesia and the Philippines, and this decision will help us provide rice to these markets, along with our existing buyers in different regions," he told Al Jazeera.

Khan, a Lahore-based exporter, acknowledged that Pakistani exporters will face competition from Indian peers, but said he was confident this challenge could be offset by sustained export levels.

"We cannot compete with India in volume, but our bumper harvest means we expect to have larger quantities to export this year," he added. Rice production in Pakistan has steadily increased over the years, except in 2022 when catastrophic floods damaged crops in Sindh province.

Last fiscal year, Pakistan's rice output rose to nearly 9.8 million metric tonnes, with experts forecasting an increase to more than 10 million metric tonnes this year, potentially leading to higher exports. Domestically, Pakistanis primarily consume wheat – more than 120 kg per person annually, among the highest in the world. Rice consumption is much lower at less than 20 kg per person annually. Most parts of India, by contrast, consume rice far more than wheat.

While Pakistani exporters are celebrating the removal of the floor price, local farmers aren't happy.

Mehmood Nawaz Shah, president of the Sindh Abadgar Board, a farmers' organisation in the southern province of Sindh, argued that the removal of the MEP would prove detrimental to the interests of growers.

"Exporters will benefit, but for us as farmers, this could lead to lower prices and reduced revenues," he told Al Jazeera.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Durga pooja, WB's biggest festival, overshadowed by RG Kar rape

Durga pooja, West Bengal's biggest carnival, is likely to be subdued this year as calls to boycott the festivities grow in response to protests over the brutal rape-murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar hospital in August, casting a shadow over the city's festive spirit.

The killing of the doctor on duty at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9 has ignited profound emotional turmoil across the state, as the vibrant excitement of Durga puja has been overshadowed by the troubling paradox of worshipping the goddess of strength and protection while real-life women continue to face grave dangers.

As Kolkata grapples with this tragedy, the city stands at a crossroads between tradition and change, torn between devotion to the goddess Durga, symbolising strength, protection, and justice, and the harsh reality of daily violence and injustice faced by women.

"It appears that this year's Durga puja will be much more subdued due to the RG Kar incident and the ongoing protests. Many people may participate in the Puja but choose to avoid the festive celebrations. Many can relate to the victim and her family, which is why the protests have emerged so spontaneously," sociologist Prashanta Roy told PTI.

The incident sparked an emotional outcry across the state, especially in the eastern metropolis, where nearly 3,000 Durga pujas are organised.

For many Kolkatans, this year's Durga puja has transformed from a mere festival into a symbol of the ongoing struggle for justice, prompting reflection on the significance of worshipping a goddess when real-life women embodying her spirit remain unsafe.

"How can the city celebrate a festival that glorifies the divine feminine while turning a blind eye to the real-life women who suffer? This year, Durga puja may not only be a celebration but also a platform for a broader conversation about women's safety and justice. This conversation is long overdue," said a professor of a government college, who has been at the forefront of protests but did not wish to be named.

In the days leading up to Durga puja, Kolkata, typically buzzes with preparations — streets lined with pandals, lights strung up, and the air filled with the scent of festive delicacies — but this year, a noticeable silence prevails, punctuated by the cries of "We Want Justice" echoing across the city.

A Durga pooja pandal based on the theme of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder case, 'Lajja', was built-in West Bengal's Kolkata **PHOTO: PTI**

Durga puja is not only Bengal's most celebrated festival but also a major economic driver, generating approximately Rs 32,377 crore in revenue according to a 2019 British Council of India report, and in 2024, this figure is expected to rise, providing vital support to thousands of livelihoods, including marquee creators, idol-makers, dhakis (traditional drummers), electricians, and vendors.

"This call to stay away from the festivities has two dimensions. Although the urban and semi-urban masses might respond to this call, the rural people are likely to participate in the festival.

"But this call for shunning festivities is likely to have an impact on the economy during Durga puja - be it advertisement revenues for various clubs or small-time traders, food stall owners, street food vendors, drummers and decorators who wait for Durga Puja throughout the year," socio-political analyst Maidul Islam told PTI.

The typical pre-puja shopping frenzy at popular markets has sharply declined, leaving vendors who depend on Durga puja for a significant portion of their annual income struggling.

"This year the sale has not been like previous years. Nearly 40 per cent of our puja stock is still in godowns," said Karthik Barui, a trader at Hatibagan Market.

Several Durga puja clubs complained that the advertisement revenue this year has come down by 20-30 per cent from the last two years, Kajal Sarkar, president of the Forum for Durgotsab, an umbrella organisation of nearly 800 odd community poojas in Kolkata and its suburbs, told PTI.

"The ad collection period is August and September and these two months witnessed intense protests across the state, so most of the brands were wary about whether to give out advertisements," he said.

"The cost of marquees, lights, decorations, and idols are all borne from the funds of the clubs and the officials of the club and are later covered by the ad revenues. But this year a huge amount is being spent from our pockets only," Saswata Basu, president of Hatibagan Sarbojonin and secretary of the forum, told PTI.

Many community puja committees are concerned about potential unforeseen and unplanned protests, despite Police Commissioner Manoj Kumar Verma's assurance that Durga puja will be peaceful. Several of these puja committees across West Bengal have declined the state government's grant of Rs 85,000 to support the festival, choosing instead to express their solidarity with the ongoing protests. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently said people look forward to the festivities during Durga puja as it is one of the state's biggest festivals.

"All of us are pained by the R G Kar incident. The matter is before the Supreme Court and the CBI is probing the case. So all of us must have faith in the judiciary and should not mix protests with the festival," TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said.

"We are not against Durga puja. But we won't be part of the festivities as we will be on the streets with our protests and fast-unto-death. For us, indulging in festivities would be a mockery of justice," junior doctor Aniket Mahato said.

—PTI

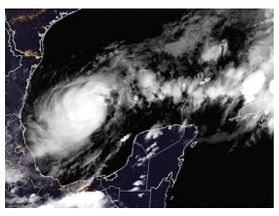


PHOTO: AP

Milton strengthens into Category 3 Hurricane in US

FLORIDA, 7 OCT

Hurricane Milton quickly intensified and is on track to become a Category 3 major hurricane with the Tampa Bay area in its sights, putting Florida on edge and triggering evacuation orders along a coast still reeling in Helene's aftermath. While forecast models vary widely, the most likely path suggests Milton could make landfall on Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area and remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida into the Atlantic Ocean, forecasters said. That would largely spare other southeastern states ravaged by Hurricane Helene, which caused catastrophic damage from Florida into the Appalachian Mountains and a death toll that rose on Sunday to at least 130 people. *—PTI*

Philippines, S Korea upgrade ties to strategic partnership

MANILA, 7 OCT

South Korea and the Philippines, each faced by increasingly hostile rival nations, elevated their ties to a strategic partnership on Monday, including broader defence and security cooperation between the two US treaty allies. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who is on a state visit to the Philippines, and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr announced the upgrade in overall relations after talks in Manila. Under the strategic partnership, the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation between their coast guards. Yoon also pledged to help modernise the Philippine military. The two leaders discussed regional issues such as territorial disputes in the South China Sea and tensions on the Korean Peninsula, they said. *—PTI*

Singapore Indian origin ex-minister apologises to nation

SINGAPORE, 7 OCT

Singapore's Indian-origin former transport minister S Iswaran on Monday began his one-year jail term in a corruption case, opting not to appeal his conviction, and apologised "unreservedly" to the nation. Iswaran, 62, was handed the jail sentence on Thursday last week for obtaining illegal gifts worth about USD 313,200 over seven years from two businessmen, and for obstruction of justice. Another 30 charges were taken into consideration during sentencing. In a statement on Facebook earlier in the day, the former minister said he "will not be appealing the sentence handed down by the court". The veteran politician had pleaded guilty on 24 September. *—PTI*

Over 6,000 in Haiti leave homes after gang attack

SAINT-MARC, 7 OCT

Nearly 6,300 people have fled their homes in the aftermath of an attack in central Haiti by heavily armed gang members that killed at least 70 people, according to the UN's migration agency. Nearly 90 per cent of the displaced are staying with relatives in host families, while 12% have found refuge in other sites including a school, the International Organization for Migration said in a report last week. The attack in Pont-Sondé happened in the early hours of Thursday morning, and many left in the middle of the night. Gang members "came in shooting and breaking into the houses to steal and burn. I just had time to grab my children and run in the dark," said 60-year-old Sonise Mirano on Sunday, who was camping in a park in the nearby coastal city of Saint-Marc. *—PTI*

Gaza fires rockets, setting off sirens in Israel

The Israeli military says three rockets were intercepted and a fourth fell in an open area

JERUSALEM, 7 OCT

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired four rockets into Israel on Monday as mourners marked the anniversary of the 7 October attack, without disrupting a nearby ceremony. It launched rockets that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv, as well as closer to the Gaza border.

Hamas also said it attacked Israeli forces in different parts of Gaza.

The Israeli military said three rockets were intercepted and a fourth fell in an open area. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The military said it launched a wave of artillery and airstrikes overnight and into Monday to thwart what it said was an imminent attack. It said it targeted Hamas launch posts and underground militant infrastructure.

The fighting on the anniversary underscored the militants' resilience in the face of a devastating Israeli offensive that has killed around 42,000 Palestinians, according to local medical officials. It has also destroyed large areas of Gaza and displaced around 90 per cent of its population. *—PTI*

Families and friends of people killed at the Nova music festival at the site of the attack, where nearly 400 were gunned down during Hamas' 7 October, 20203 assault on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

US SPENT $17.9B ON AID TO ISRAEL SINCE 7 OCT, 2023

Here are the details on US financial support for war in Gaza focusing on military aid, arms sales, and operational cost

USD 17.9 billion
Total military aid sent to Israel since 7 Oct, 2023, making it the highest in one year.

USD 4.4 billion
From US stockpiles of arms and equipment.

THIS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INCLUDES;

- Funds for munitions, such as artillery shells, bunker-busters, and precision-guided bombs.
- USD 4 billion: To replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defence systems.
- Cash provided for rifles, jet fuel, and other military necessities.
- USD 4.86 billion: Spent on US military operations in the Middle East since 7 Oct 2023.
- This covers increased deployments, operations targeting threats to US forces and Israeli assets, including the Navy-led campaign against Houthi attacks on commercial shipping.
- USD 251.2 billion: Total military aid to Israel (inflation-adjusted) since 1959, making it the largest US military aid recipient in history.

- USD 3.8 billion per year: Pre-agreed annual US military aid to Israel under an Obama-era agreement, running through 2028.

20 Indonesians evacuated from Lebanon arrive in Jakarta

JAKARTA, 7 OCT

Twenty Indonesian nationals and a Lebanese evacuated from Lebanon arrived in Jakarta on a commercial flight early Monday and will likely be followed by 20 more in the afternoon, officials said. President Joko Widodo has called to prioritize the evacuation of Indonesians as hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah escalate and fears of a wider regional war. *—PTI*

Australian PM Albanese condemns Hamas' 7 October attack on Israel

CANBERRA, 7 OCT

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement Monday that the day carried "terrible pain" and his government "unequivocally" condemned Hamas' attack on Israel a year ago. "We unequivocally condemn all prejudice and hatred. There is no place in Australia for discrimination against people of any faith," Albanese said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ukraine strikes Russian oil hub in Crimea

KYIV, 7 OCT

Ukraine's military claimed it struck a major oil terminal Monday in Crimea that provides fuel for Russia's war effort as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the war has entered a key phase.

Both sides are facing the issue of how to sustain their costly war of attrition — a conflict that started with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and that shows no signs of a resolution.

Ukraine's General Staff said on social media that the oil terminal in Feodosia, on the south coast of the Russia-occupied Crimea Peninsula, has been supplying the Russian army with fuel and that the strike was part of an ongoing effort to "undermine the military and economic potential of the Russian Federation".

Russian-installed authorities in the city of Feodosia on the coast of the Black Sea reported a fire at the terminal on Monday morning but did not say what might have caused it. Ukraine has increasingly targeted rear areas that are essential for Russia's onslaught, now deep into its third year. It has developed long-range drones that have hit oil depots and refineries as well as armories. Ukraine's aim is to impair Russia's ability to support its front-line units, especially in the eastern Donetsk. *—PTI*

2 Chinese killed in Pak bombing

KARACHI, 7 OCT

A Pakistani separatist group claimed responsibility for a late-night bombing that targeted a convoy with Chinese nationals outside the country's largest airport, killing two workers from China and wounding eight people, officials and the insurgent group said Monday.

The attack by the Baloch Liberation Army outside the airport in the southern port city of Karachi was the latest deadly assault on Chinese in the country and came a week before Pakistan is to host a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security grouping founded by China and Russia to counter Western alliances.

Initially, Pakistani authorities gave conflicting details and indicated the explosion may have been from an oil tanker but police later confirmed it was a bomb attack.

Pakistani news channels broadcast videos of flames engulfing cars and a thick column of smoke rising from the scene. Troops and police cordoned off the area. On Monday, counterterrorism officials were investigating how the attacker reached Karachi, Pakistan's largest city. *—PTI*

Security officials examine the site of an explosion that caused injures and destroyed vehicles outside the Karachi airport, Pakistan **PHOTO: PTI**

Imran Khan's PTI ends protest

Life was returning to normal in the Pakistani capital on Monday after the violent protest by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters subsided in the wake of high drama involving the mysterious disappearance of the party leader Ali Amin Gandapur. Gandapur, the chief minister of the restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in the northwest, is a mercurial PTI leader and confidante of Imran Khan. Following Imran Khan's directives, he announced that the party will stage a protest at the famous D-Chowk in the heart of the city on Friday - the same venue where the PTI had organised a sit-in for 126 days in 2014. *—PTI*

Pak bans Imran Khan from meeting wife

LAHORE, 7 OCT

Pakistan's Punjab government on Monday banned jailed former premier Imran Khan from meeting his family members, lawyers and party leaders till October 18 due to "security concerns", amidst his party staging anti-government protests in several cities.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Khan has been lodged in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail in multiple cases since August 2023. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has accused PTI of trying to disrupt the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit scheduled to be held on Oct 15 and 16 in Islamabad and emphasised that the government will ensure thaThe government has taken the decision in view of "security concerns", he said. According to sources, the government has taken the decision in anticipation of the upcoming SCO summit. *—PTI*

AT LEAST THREE KILLED AS FLOODS SWAMP THAILAND'S CHIANG MAI

TAIPEI, 7 OCT

At least three people have been killed after flash floods swamped Thailand's northern city of Chiang Mai.

The city, a popular tourist destination, was inundated by torrential rain as the Ping River swelled to 5.30am, its highest level in 50 years, on Saturday night. The river runs along the eastern edge of the city,

Residents were forced to wade through thigh-high brown waters, and some tourists evacuated from their hotels in trucks. Some shops were forced to close, while the central train station was shut after floodwaters poured inside. Train services to the city were also suspended. Saritdet Charoenchai, a public health official, said that three people had been killed, including a 44-year-old man who was electrocuted and a 33-year-old woman who died in a mudslide. *—Courtesy, Al-Jazeera*

Kamala talks abortion on 'Call Her Daddy' podcast

WASHINGTON DC, 7 OCT

- Kamala dinged Trump as she has in recent speeches, leaning in on his integrity and saying "this guy is full of lies" when he talks about abortion and other issues

Vice President Kamala Harris opened a media blitz by the Democratic ticket on Sunday by appearing on the popular "Call Her Daddy" podcast about abortion, sexual abuse and other issues that resonate with women, working in some digs at her GOP opponent along the way.

In the roughly 40-minute interview, taped last week, the Democratic presidential nominee spoke about the grit it takes to be a woman seeking public office, the toughness her mother instilled in her and the importance of reproductive rights in this election.

The programme is the most-listened-to podcast for women and it has millions of fans tuning in for talk about relationships, sex, mental health and women's empowerment. The discussion with Harris was on the tame side for the show, with the vice president keeping her message focused, in part, on the value of ignoring people who have doubted her.

"I don't hear no. I urge all the Daddy Gang,' don't hear no, just don't hear it," she said. "I think it's really important not to let other people define you."

Harris has been criticized for not doing more media interviews. Harris dinged Trump as she has in recent speeches, leaning in on his integrity and saying "this guy is full of lies" when he talks about abortion and other issues. She dismissed Vance's comments about "childless cat ladies" as "mean, and mean-spirited." *—PTI*

Kamala Harris **PHOTO: ANI**

CASE OF NEGLIGENCE

Woman sues S Korea as abducted kid sent abroad

SEOUL, 7 OCT

A 70-year-old South Korean woman sued her government, an adoption agency, and an orphanage Monday over the adoption of her daughter, who was sent to the United States in 1976, months after she was kidnapped at age 4.

The damage suit filed by Han Tae-soon, whose story was part of an Associated Press investigation published last month, could ignite further debate on the dubious child-gathering practices and widespread falsification of paperwork that tarnished South Korea's adoption program, which annually sent thousands of kids to the West during the 1970-80s.

It was the first known case of a Korean birth parent suing for damages against the government and an adoption agency over the wrongful adoption of their child, said Kim Soo-jung, one of the lawyers representing Han.

It was the first known case of a Korean birth parent suing against the government and an adoption agency over the wrongful adoption

Han searched for her daughter, Laurie Bender, for more than 40 years before they reunited through DNA testing in 2019. Speaking to reporters in front of the Seoul Central District Court, Han argued that the South Korean government was responsible for failing to prevent the adoption of Bender.

Han accuses Holt Children's Services, South Korea's biggest adoption agency, of facilitating Bender's adoption without checking her background. Her lawyers said the Jechon Children's Home made no effort to find the parents after Bender was placed at the facility by police in May 1975, a day after Han reported her as missing.

"For 44 years, I wandered and searched for my child, but the joy of meeting her was only momentary and now I am in so much pain because we can't communicate in the same language," Han said, fighting back tears. *—PTI*

Starmer names new chief of staff following turmoil

LONDON, 7 OCT

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday named a new chief of staff after a high-profile resignation amid a wider shake-up of his top team at 10 Downing Street to mark his Labour Party government's first 100 days in office.

Sue Gray, previously a top civil servant appointed by former prime minister Boris Johnson's to investigate the partygate scandal of Covid-19 lockdown law breaching parties within the then Tory government, resigned as Starmer's top aide saying the "intense commentary around my position risked becoming a distraction to the government's vital work of change".

She was referring to weeks of media revelations and controversies surrounding her role, including her salary package of GBP 170,000 being GBP 3,000 more than the Prime Minister being leaked to the BBC.

Morgan McSweeney, the Labour Party's former campaign director who masterminded July's general election landslide for the party, will replace Gray as the new chief of staff. His appointment comes alongside political director Vidhya Alakeson and director of government relations Jill Cuthbertson being promoted to deputy chiefs of staff. *—PTI*

Keir Starmer **PHOTO: ANI**

Rupee settles flat at 83.99 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled on a flat note at 83.99 against the US dollar on Monday on selling pressure from foreign funds and weak tone in the domestic markets. Forex traders said elevated crude oil prices and escalating tensions between Israel and Iran weighed on the local unit, while all-time high forex reserves boosted investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.96 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day high of 83.95 and a low of 83.99. The domestic currency finally ended the day at 83.99 (provisional). *—PTI*

Airtel, Fortinet partner to launch 'Airtel Secure net'

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Airtel Business, the B2B arm of telco major Bharti Airtel, on Monday said it has partnered with global cybersecurity firm Fortinet to launch 'Airtel Secure Internet', an internet security solution for enterprises. The service model is designed to protect against technology obsolescence, ensuring businesses remain future-proof while reducing capex expenses, a company statement said. Combining Airtel's internet connectivity with Fortinet's next-generation firewall, it will offer end-to-end protection through Airtel's Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Fortinet's Security Orchestration, Automation and Response (SOAR) platform, it said. It added that enterprises can also opt for Airtel's next-gen intelligent SOC to access a larger portfolio of security services. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Manish Tiwari to take over driving seat of Nestle India

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

FMCG major Nestle India on Monday announced a change of leadership with the appointment of Manish Tiwary as the Managing Director of the company after the incumbent, Suresh Narayanan, retires in July next year. Tiwary, who was the country manager of Amazon India, was appointed as the Managing Director of Nestle India effective from 1 August, 2025, according to a regulatory filing. Narayanan will retire as Chairman & Managing Director of Nestle India on 31 July, 2025 after serving 26 years, it added. The nominations have been received from the Swiss parent firm Nestle SA. Tiwary is a Director at Amazon Digital Services and More Consumer Brand. He will step down from his directorship on 30 October, 2024, statement said. *—PTI*

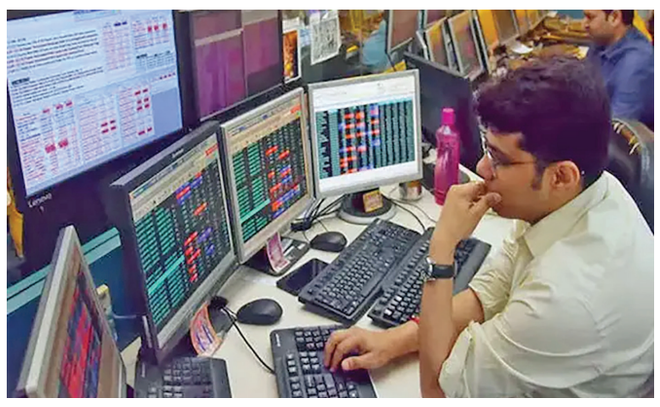
IFC extends USD 500 million loan to Axis Bank to fund green

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

International Finance Corporation (IFC), private sector lending arm of the World Bank Group, on Monday tied up with Axis Bank to provide a USD 500 million (about Rs 4,200 crore) loan to help develop a blue finance market and scale up financing of green projects in India. This is IFC's first blue investment in India and the first blue transaction by a financial institution in the country, a statement said. Blue loans are financing instruments that raise and earmark funds for investments such as water and wastewater management, reduction of marine plastic pollution, restoration of marine ecosystems, sustainable shipping, eco-friendly tourism, and offshore renewable energy. With India's rapid urbanisation and economic growth, there is a substantial opportunity to enhance water and energy efficiency. Water treatment market size is expected to USD 3 billion by 2029. *—PTI*

Mkt falls, Investors' lose ₹ 8 lakh crore

Sensex falls 638.45 pts to settle at 81,050



Nifty slumps 218.85 points to end at 24,795.75 PHOTO: ANI

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

Market investors became poorer by Rs 8.90 lakh crore as Sensex extended its losing streak for the sixth straight session and settled sharply lower on Monday dragged down by heavy selling in bellwether stocks amid mixed global trends and outflow of foreign funds.

Falling for the sixth consecutive session, the BSE Sensex tumbled 638.45 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at 81,050. During the day, it plummeted 962.39 points or 1.17 per cent to 80,726.06.

The NSE Nifty slumped 218.85 points or 0.87 per cent to end at 24,795.75.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones, NTPC, State Bank of India, PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Titan and UltraTech Cement were the major laggards.

Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Tata Consultancy Services and Tech Mahindra defied the trend.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude surged 2.09 per cent to USD 79.68 a barrel.

Investors are reassessing their portfolio positions and FIIs outflows are exacerbated. Amid escalating geopolitical tensions, the surging oil prices poses a further challenge to the domestic economy in the short-term, Nair added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 9,896.95 crore on Friday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 8,905.08 crore, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

Ola Electric stocks tumble 9 per cent

New Delhi, 7 Oct

Shares of Ola Electric Mobility tumbled 9 per cent on Monday amid reports of service quality issues of its electric scooters and its CEO's spat on social media.

Sliding for the third straight day, the stock of the company plunged 9.14 per cent to trade at Rs 90 apiece on the NSE.

On the BSE, it fell 8.93 per cent to Rs 90.20 per piece.

Later, it slumped 9.59 per cent and 9.43 per cent to hit register an intraday low of Rs 89.55 and 89.71, on the NSE and BSE, respectively.

Heidelberg stock hits 52-week high

New Delhi, 7 Oct

Shares of HeidelbergCement India surged 18 per cent in intra-day trade on Monday amid reports that the Adani Group is in talks to acquire Indian operations of Germany's Heidelberg Materials.

The proposed buyout of Heidelberg's India unit will be led by billionaire Gautam Adani-led Ambuja Cements and could be worth around USD 1.2 billion (about Rs 10,000 crore), the reports said.

The stock rallied 17.95 per cent to hit its 52-week high of Rs 257.85

World shares mixed after US jobs report

Oil prices go higher amid Israel-Gaza war

After a day of strong gains in Asia, shares fell in Europe PHOTO: ANI

TOKYO, 7 OCT

World shares were mixed on Monday while oil prices pushed higher after the Israeli military said that projectiles fired from Gaza set off sirens in central Tel Aviv, as Israel marked a year since 7 October attack by Hamas.

After a day of strong gains in Asia, shares fell in Europe. The CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.1% lower to 7,530.43. Germany's DAX lost 0.3% to 19,059.46 and the FTSE 100 in London was down 0.1% at 8,275.18.

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were down 0.4%.

Asian shares logged strong gains after a surprisingly strong US jobs report raised optimism about the economy, sparking a rally Friday on Wall Street.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index gained 1.8% to 39,332.74 after the yen sank against the US dollar. The Japanese currency has bounced on speculation over the central bank's plans for interest rates since Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba took office last week. Lower interest rates tend to boost prices of shares and other asset, and both Ishiba and the central bank governor suggested no hikes were likely soon.

Nintendo gained 4.4% following reports that a Saudi wealth fund was planning to increase its investment in the Kyoto, Japan-based video game maker.

After slight losses earlier in the day, US benchmark crude oil was up $1.26 at $75.64 per barrel, while Brent crude, the international standard, picked up $1.09 to $79.14 per barrel. —PTI

₹78,450 PER 10GMS

Gold jumps ₹250, hits all-time high

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Gold prices appreciated by Rs 250 to hit a fresh all-time high of Rs 78,700 per 10 grams on Monday on account of consistent buying support from jewellers and firm trends in the overseas markets.

The precious metal had settled at Rs 78,450 per 10 grams in the previous close on Friday.

However, silver declined Rs 200 to Rs 94,000 per kg from Rs 94,200 per kg on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 200 to hit an all-time high level of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 78,100 per 10 grams in the previous session.

PHOTO: PTI

Traders attributed the gains in gold prices to an increase in the domestic demand by stockists and retailers.

Besides, the decline in equity markets also aided the rally in the precious metal as investors moved towards safe-haven assets such as gold, they added.

On the other hand, silver fell 0.61 per cent to USD 32.20 per ounce in the international markets. *—PTI*

France and India to develop aeronautics cluster

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

France and India are planning to develop an aeronautics cluster as both countries work on boosting their cooperation in the aerospace sector, French Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou said on Monday.

Speaking at the conference organised by the French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) in the national capital, he said the partnership between the two countries is not just strategic but universal.

India and France have a long-standing partnership in aerospace, defence. In the first half of 2024, he said the exports of French aerospace companies to the country stood at 2.7 billion euros.

According to him, France and India will be developing an aeronautic cluster as well as an Indo-French campus for aeronautics and space. —PTI

RBI panel to decide on rate-cuts tomorrow

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

The reconstituted rate-setting panel of the Reserve Bank on Monday started deliberations on the next bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectations of a status quo on interest rates in view of inflationary concerns and the possibility of a flare-up in the Middle East crisis that could jack up commodity prices.

In the current context, experts feel that the RBI may not follow the US Federal Reserve, which lowered the benchmark rates by 50 basis points, and the central banks of some developed nations, which have reduced the interest rates.

Earlier this month, the government reconstituted the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

It has appointed Ram Singh, Saugata Bhattacharya, and Nagesh Kumar as external members of the MPC. They have replaced Ashima Goyal, Shashanka Bhide, and Jayanth R Varma.

MPC Chairman Das will reveal the outcome of the three-day discussion on Wednesday (October 9).

The central bank has kept the repo or short-term lending rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February 2023, and experts think some easing could only be possible in December.

The government has tasked the central bank to ensure that Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. *—PTI*

Naidu: India's air passenger traffic to touch 300M

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India's domestic air passenger traffic is projected to touch 300 million by 2030 and about USD 11 billion is being spent to develop airports, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said on Monday.

The minister also said India and France can work together to develop a robust global SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) supply chain.

He was speaking at the conference organised by the French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) in the national capital.

India is one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets and airlines are expanding their fleets well as networks to meet the rising demand.

Currently, India has 157 airports, heliports and waterdromes. *—PTI*

India cuts local remedies exhaustion period to 3 years for UAE investors

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India has cut down by two years the local remedies exhaustion period for UAE investors from five years under the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which came into effect between the two countries in August.

The treaty, which is aimed at providing comfort to investors of both countries, also includes portfolio investments in a deviation from such treaties in the past.

Local remedies exhaustion means that investors must first try to resolve their disputes using the legal system of the host country before they can take the matter to international arbitration.

The treaty signed between India and the UAE in February has been enforced from August 31 this year, a finance ministry statement said.

Unlike India's Model BIT, which excludes portfolio investments such as stocks and bonds, the India-UAE BIT has included them as protected investments.

According to think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), this shift increases India's exposure to disputes over financial instruments, even those that don't contribute significantly to economic development, moving away from the Model BIT's focus on long-term investments.

The other key features of the pact included provisions such as treatment of investment with obligation for no denial of justice, no fundamental breach of due process, no targeted discrimination and no manifestly abusive or arbitrary treatment.

With a share of 3 per cent, the UAE is the seventh largest in total foreign direct investment (FDI) received in India, with cumulative investment of about USD 19 billion. *—PTI*

SAIL, BHP SIGN PACT FOR LOW EMISSION STEEL

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

SAIL on Monday said it has signed an agreement with global resources company BHP to work on strategies for low-emission steel manufacturing technologies.

Both companies signed the memorandum of understanding to support decarbonisation in steel making, the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a statement.

"This collaboration is an important step for SAIL and BHP in promoting lower carbon steelmaking technology pathways for the blast furnace route in India." *—PTI*

Govt to set up 100 food testing labs, 50 irradiation centres

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Union Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan on Monday said the government will build 100 food testing labs and 50 food irradiation centres as part of its efforts to boost processing levels and ensure quality.

The minister asked the industry not to compromise on the quality of products as this will affect not only brands but the country's image as well.

He said the ministry will set up 100 food testing labs to ensure that products meet standard norms set by regulators.

The minister assured the industry that he would try to address any issues and challenges affecting the growth of the food processing sector.

Addressing a Ficci seminar, Paswan emphasised the need to minimise wastage and promote value addition.

The minister also exhorted industry players to make India a global food basket.

To boost processing levels, Paswan said as many as 50 food irradiation units will be established.

On the sidelines of the event, he said the ministry has already invited Expressions of Interest (EoIs) from prospective entrepreneurs to set up multi-product food irradiation units. *—PTI*

NEW MERGER IN FOCUS

Amazon acquires MX Player app; to merge with miniTV

Amazon has merged its free-streaming service Amazon MiniTV with MX Player to form Amazon MX Player.

What does the deal entail?

- The agreement brings together Amazon miniTV and MX Player, uniting two major ad-supported platforms into one entertainment powerhouse: Amazon MX Player.
- As of September 2024, this new service boasts over 250 million unique users featuring an extensive collection of original content, international shows, and local programming available in various Indian languages.
- Users can access the service through mobile apps, Amazon's shopping app, Prime Video, Fire TV and connected TVs.
- Amazon said it will continue to invest in originals and returning seasons of popular shows, which will help "provide advertisers the opportunity to deepen their relationships with viewers".
- Amazon also owns Prime Video -- a subscription video-on-demand over-the-top streaming and rental service.

What is Amazon MX Player?

- Amazon MX Player is a free, ad-supported video streaming service available in India only.

PHOTO: X

Gulveer finds place in squad for Asian Cross Country

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Asian Games medallist long distance runner Gulveer Singh was on Monday named in the eight-member Indian senior team that will take part in the Asian Cross Country championships to be held on 20 October in Hong Kong. The 26-year-old Army man had won a bronze medal in the men's 10,000m race in the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. Singh had an excellent run on the track this season. In September, he improved his national 5,000m record to 13:11.82 seconds during a World Athletics Continental Tour event in Japan. Athletics Federation of India (AFI) selection committee has also named the national senior and junior teams for the South Asian Cross Country Championships to be held on November 24 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The national team that will compete can compete at South Asian Cross Country. *—PTI*

PCB 'confident' that Champions Trophy will be in Pak

LAHORE, 7 OCT

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Monday expressed confidence that the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy would be held in the country and all teams, including arch-rivals India, would participate in the tournament. The 2025 edition of the Champions Trophy is scheduled to start on 19 February, and the final is on 9 March. Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi have been earmarked as the venues. India hasn't sent its team to Pakistan since July 2008 due to tense political relations between the two countries. "The Indian team should come. I don't see them cancel or postpone coming here and we are confident we will host all the teams in the Champions Trophy in Pakistan," Naqvi said. He also said that Pakistan was prepared to host all the teams including India and preparations were on schedule. *—PTI*

Alaskan Knights beat SG Pipers to remain unbeaten

LONDON, 7 OCT

PBG Alaskan Knights narrowly defeated Alpine SG Pipers with a 9–7 score to continue their unbeaten run at the Global Chess League here. Alaskan Knights won all their five of encounters after 15 matches, the halfway stage of the tournament. Despite the team's top player, Anish Giri blundering a piece and losing to Magnus Carlsen in just 20 minutes, the Alaskan Knights came out on top garnering 58 game points. Defending champions Triveni Continental Kings climbed to second place after defeating the upGrad Mumba Masters. Continental Kings' icon, Alireza Firouzja, continued his winning streak by defeating France's top-rated player, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. An epic encounter between Carlsen and Nakamura highlighted the final match. *—PTI*

Hardik overtakes Kohli to inish most T20Is with a six

Hardik accomplished this during 1st T20 against B'desh

GWALIOR, 7 OCT

Star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya overtook legendary batter Virat Kohli to achieve a unique feat of finishing most T20I matches with a six.

Hardik accomplished this feat during the first T20I against Bangladesh at Gwalior.

During the game, Hardik delivered a superb all-round performance. First while bowling, he took a wicket for 26 runs in his four overs, with an economy rate of 6.50. Later, during a run-chase of 128 runs, Hardik delivered perfect finishing touches with a quick-fire 39* in 16 balls, with five fours and two sixes. His runs came at a strike rate of 243.75.

During his knock, Pandya unleashed some fine strokes. This also included a no-look ramp shot over wicketkeeper's head. The all-rounder oozed his signature confidence and swagger while playing the shot, trusting his power and bat enough to know it was headed to a boundary anyways.

Now, Hardik has finished a T20I match for India with a six a total of five times, overtaking Virat's previous record of doing so four times.

Also, with his one wicket, Pandya (87 wickets) overtook pacer Arshdeep Singh (86 wickets) to become India's fourth-highest wicket-taker in the shortest format. The leading wicket-taker for India is spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, with 96 scalps. *—ANI*

Hardik has finished a T20I match for India with a six a total of five times, overtaking Virat's previous record of doing so 4 times. **PHOTO: PTI**

Mayank set to be 'Million Dollar' man

India's latest pace sensation Mayank Yadav is set to walk into the IPL 'Million Dollar Club' after making his T20I debut against Bangladesh on Sunday, with Lucknow Super Giants needing a minimum of Rs 11 crore (USD 1.31 million) to retain his services for the next season. Similarly, Sunrisers Hyderabad will also need to pay a minimum Rs 11 crore to avail all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy's services after his international debut in the same match. As per IPL retention rules, any 'uncapped player', who makes his international debut in any of the three formats before the auctions will be elevated to 'capped player' category. *—PTI*

WORLD SHOOTING C'SHIP

Deepak Dalal, Kamaljeet, Raj Chandra during the World Junior Shooting Championship, on Monday **PHOTO: X/@Kamaljeet**

India's team wins gold in men's 50m pistol event

- In the junior women's 50m pistol, Parisha Gupta won an individual silver with a score of 540. She could not get past Hungary's Miriam Jako's effort of 546

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The troika of Deepak Dalal (545), Kamaljeet (543) and Raj Chandra (528) won the men's 50m pistol team gold medal on the concluding day of the Junior World Shooting Championship at the Peruvian capital of Lima.

Indian shooting team won the yellow metal with a combined tally of 1616 points beating Azerbaijan by a point. Armenia came third.

In all, India's junior shooters finished the championship on top with a rich haul of 24 medals which included 13 gold, three silver and eight bronze.

Italy finished second with five gold and four silver and bronze medals each while Norway was third with four gold and a total of 10 medals.

On Sunday, Mukesh Nelavalli also won an individual bronze in the event, his sixth medal of the competition, shooting a total of 548 over 60-shots. Azerbaijan's Imran Garayev won the gold with a score of 552.

In the junior women's 50m pistol, Parisha Gupta won an individual silver with a score of 540. She could not get past Hungary's Miriam Jako's effort of 546, which was a junior world record.

In the other event of the final day, Shardul Vihan and Sabeera Harris combined to give India a bronze in the junior mixed team competition, played 75 targets. *—PTI*

India's batters Soham Patwardhan and Nikhil during the first day of the 2nd Test cricket match between India & Australia U-19 **PHOTO: PTI**

India makes robust start against Aus in U-19 2nd Test

CHENNAI, 7 OCT

Nitya Pandya led India U-19's charge with a fluent 94 as the hosts finished at 316 for five on the opening day of the second youth Test against Australia on Monday.

Pandya was among the four half centurions for India on the day and also the top scorer, having missed his triple-figure mark by a narrow margin of six runs.

The right-handed Pandya cracked 12 fours to make 94 off 135 balls before falling to Harry Hoekstra (2/29), who delivered an early blow to India with the dismissal of Vaibhav Suryavanshi (3).

Vihaan Malhotra could only manage a four in his score of 10 off as many as 75 balls as Australia seemed to have controlled the initial stages of the game, but Pandya led India's fightback and hosts finished at strong position at stumps.

Nikhil was the more aggressive among the two as he hit seven fours for his 61 off 93 balls before being dismissed.

Patwardhan was holding fort at the other end with an unbeaten 61 off 120 balls (6x4s) with wicketkeeper-batter Harvansh Pangalia on 7.

India lead the youth Test series 1-0 having won the first game by two wickets. *—PTI*

SL is improved, admits Shafali; cautions Smriti

DUBAI, 7 OCT

Sri Lanka won't be mere pushovers especially after their victory against India in the last Asia Cup final, said talented opener Shafali Verma who believes that the islanders are no longer solely dependent on their talismanic skipper Chamari Athapaththu. India will meet Sri Lanka in their must-win penultimate group league game of the women's T20 World Cup on Wednesday. The Indian team not only need to win but record a victory big enough to boost its net run-rate (NRR) before the do-or-die league game against defending champions Australia on October 13. For India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, the game against Australia is crucial and there will be little or no margin of error against the Southern Stars, who have always had an upper-hand on India in all global tournaments.

Pacer Renuka Singh Thakur is eyeing to get the rival Sri Lankan skipper cheaply as she can take the game away in a flash with her audacious strokeplay. *—PTI*

Jayasuriya appointed as head coach of SL till 2026 T20 WC

COLOMBO, 7 OCT

Former captain Sanath Jayasuriya was on Monday appointed as full-time head coach of the Sri Lankan cricket team until the end of the 2026 T20 World Cup.

The former left-handed opener was Sri Lanka's interim coach since early July, and after he impressed in the role against India and England, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has decided to hand him full-time responsibility.

Under Jayasuriya's guidance, Sri Lanka won their first bilateral ODI series against India in 27 years, and then defeated England in an away Test for the first time in 10 years.

Most recently, Sri Lanka defeated New Zealand 2-0 in a Test series at home.

"The Executive Committee of Sri Lanka Cricket made this decision taking into consideration the team's good performances in the recent tours against India, England, and New Zealand, where Jayasuriya was in charge as the interim head coach," SLC said in a statement.

Sanath Jayasuriya. Photo: X/ OfficialSLC

"The appointment came into effect on October 1, 2024, and will remain until March 31, 2026."

Jayasuriya had been a chief selector in the past and his first assignment as full-time head coach will be the limited overs series against West Indies, starting in Dambulla on 13 October. *—PTI*

Pak ends on 384-4 against Eng on day 1

MULTAN, 7 OCT

Captain Shan Masood and Abdullah Shafique hit centuries as Pakistan dominated Day 1 of the first test against a new-look England pace attack on Monday.

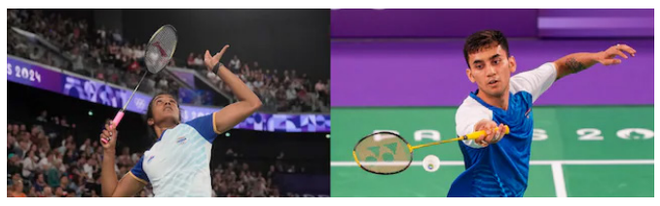
Masood, who compiled his first test ton in four years, smashed 151 off 177 balls while Shafique made a fluent 102 to help the home team reach stumps on 328-4.

England took three wickets in the final session, after Masood and Shafique had shared a huge stand of 253 for the second wicket as the visitors toiled in the searing heat of Multan.

Saud Shakeel was unbeaten on 35 and nightwatchman Naseem Shah yet to score at the close of play.

Fast bowler Gus Atkinson, playing his first overseas test, claimed 2-70 while Jack Leach, returning after a spell out of the team, picked up 1-61 on a wicket which had a tinge of grass but gave little assistance to pace or spin.

Debutant Brydon Carse twice came close to a wicket. Masood successfully overturned on-field umpire Kumar Dharmasena's lbw decision through a TV referral early in his knock, while stand-in skipper Ollie Pope couldn't hold onto a low catch at short cover off the same batter. *—PTI*



PV Sindhu & Lakshya Sen during Arctic Open Super 500 **Photo: PTI**

Arctic Open Super 500: Sindhu, Sen eye comeback

VANTAA, 7 OCT

Star shuttlers PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will lead the Indian contingent at the Arctic Open Super 500 tournament commencing here on Tuesday, as they eagerly look to reclaim their momentum on the international stage following a medal-less outing at Paris Olympics.

This tournament marks the first outing for Sindhu and Sen since the Olympic Games, and they are keen to reset their goals. The duo has reassessed their performances and implemented changes to regain their rhythm.

Sen, who narrowly missed a medal in Paris, spent time at the Red Bull Arena in Austria for physical assessment.

Sindhu, who exited in the round of 16 in Paris, will face familiar rival Canada's Michelle Li, while Sen, who lost in the bronze medal playoff, will compete against Denmark's Rasmus Gemke.

Former world number one Srikanth is set to face George, while Sathish will battle against France's Arnaud Merkle. *—PTI*

Bagan considered withdrawn from ACL 2: AFC

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Mohun Bagan Super Giant are considered to have withdrawn from the AFC Champions League 2 after the Kolkata side decided against travelling to Iran to face Tractor FC, the continental body AFC said on Monday, pending further decision on the matter.

Keeping their players' "safety and security" in mind, Mohun Bagan Super Giant had last month decided against travelling to Iran for the October 2 match owing to the volatile situation that prevailed in the west Asian nation at that time.

Mohun Bagan SG were to play Tractor FC on October 2 in their Group A match of the ACL 2 -- the continent's second tier club competition -- but their players expressed unwillingness to play in Iran. *—PTI*

'IT'S TIME TO REST'

'Produnova queen' Dipa Karmakar announces retirement

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Dipa Karmakar, who blazed a trail by becoming the first Indian woman gymnast to compete at the Olympics and finish a historic fourth, announced her retirement on Monday, ending a career in which she inspired awe for routinely performing the highly-difficult Produnova vault.

The diminutive 31-year-old from Tripura grabbed headlines with her fourth-place finish in the vault final of the 2016 Rio Games, losing an Olympic medal by just 0.15 points.

"After much thought and reflection, I have decided to retire from competitive gymnastics. This is not an easy decision, but it feels like the right time," she said in a statement.

"Gymnastics has been at the centre of my life for as long as I can remember, and I am grateful for every moment -- the highs, the lows, and everything in between."

Dipa said she hopes to give back to the sport by becoming a coach at some point in her life or she might simply remain a "supporter of the next generation of gymnasts following their dreams".

Hailing from Agartala, Dipa is one of only five women in gymnastics history to have successfully executed the Produnova, which involves two somersaults before landing and is called the 'vault of death' owing to the high risk of injury it poses.

"When I look back, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride for everything I've achieved. Representing India on the world stage, winning medals, and most memorably, performing the Produnova vault at the Rio Olympics, will forever be cherished as the pinnacle of my career," she said.

Dipa was initiated to the sport when she was only six and was coached by Soma Nandi and Bishweshwar Nandi, who remained her mentor throughout her career, guiding her to several international medals and fame.

As a child, Dipa had flat feet, a physical condition which would have ended her dream of becoming a gymnast. But through extensive training, she was able to develop an arch in her foot.

In 2021, despite facing several career setbacks, Dipa clinched a gold medal at the Asian Gymnastics Championships in Tashkent.

"But my last victory at the Asian Gymnastics Championship in Tashkent was a turning point. After that win, I truly believed I could push my body to reach new heights again. Sometimes, our bodies tell us it's time to rest," she said. *—PTI*

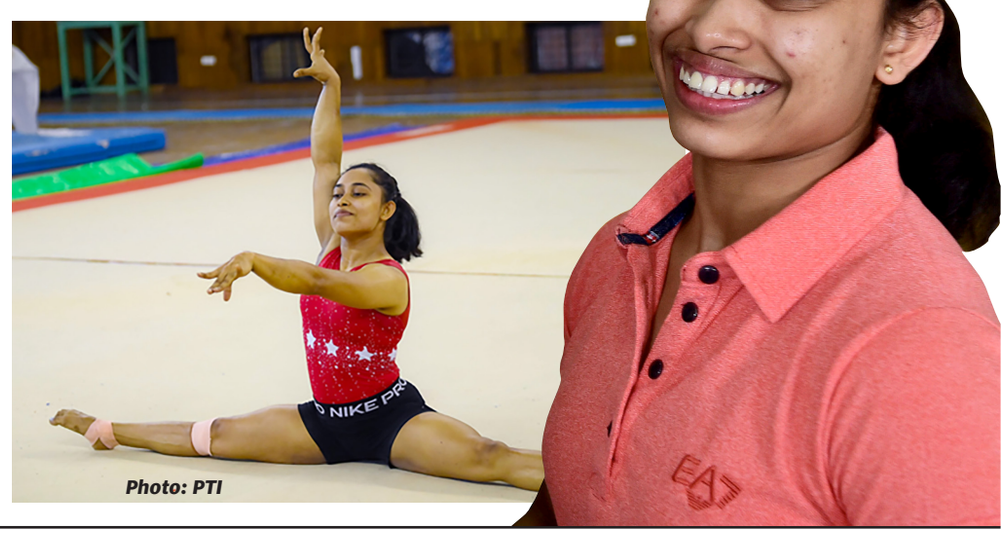


Photo: PTI